

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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CHAPTER LIX. DRIVEN AWAY.

GRACE sat at work by the fireside whilst Nan read to her and Sibyl. This latter had lost much of her youthful spirits; her troubles had changed her, she was quieter and sadder than her elder sister, and the two might almost be said to have changed places.

"Who rang the bell just now?" said Nan, when the maid brought up the evening tea.

"It was the gentleman you said wasn't to be let in," was the answer. Grace blushed scarlet, and Nan was annoyed. She had not meant to hear her own words repeated before Grace, so she said, "Very well."

"He wished particular to see you, ma'am; but I told him it was no use my asking you." Grace could bear it no longer, she rose up and left the room, and in her own room she sobbed bitterly over the idea of Austin having been turned away from their door on this dreadfully foggy evening—he who had been so kind, so good to her in her time of loneliness; he who had loved her so truly. Presently Nan followed her and knocked at her door.

"Grace, did you think me wrong? It is because you do not understand men, my poor child; they are all selfish and heartless. He has no business to come here again after all I said to him last time."

"Nan, you must be right, only——"

"And you must try to get over your

fancy, my child. He will only despise you, and besides, you can never be more to him. No, child; even though my words sound cruel, I think they are for your real happiness. Forget him, Grace, entirely."

"Nan, I will try; I am ungrateful and horrid to have one thought apart from you, only out there at Unterberg, when I was so very miserable and lonely, he was the one friend I had; you don't know how good he was. I can't help being grateful to him and loving him a little—I can't."

"Gratitude is all very well. I dare say he may be a well-intentioned young man, I don't say that he is not, but as things are, with my consent you shall never see him again."

"I would do anything for you, Nan, even this, only you mustn't mind if sometimes I feel as if I should like to see him once, only once more, just to thank him again."

"Humph!" said Nan, "those 'once mores' are very deluding things; besides, I am not sure why he comes now, but remember he has made no attempt all this time to see you; in fact, I expected he would have come before, and his not doing so decided me as to his character. There, you see I am illogical, but right, I feel sure, all the same——"

"Yes, I think you are, and if you were not I would do it all the same, for you have a right to tell me what you wish me to do."

In spite of this, Grace felt very wretched the next morning. If only she could see Austin once, and tell him how she thanked him for his kindness, even if she must never see him again!

Nan went out, taking Sibyl with her; but Grace had a headache, having slept so little, so she stayed within, wondering if

Austin thought her very, very ungrateful. About twelve o'clock a letter was brought up to her, and Grace saw at once that it was from him. She hardly dared open it now Nan was away. What would she say? But when she did so she felt even more guilty.

"DEAR MISS EVANS,—I must see you this morning, if only for five minutes; will you not grant me this request?

"Yours faithfully,

"AUSTIN GORDON.

"I shall call about twelve o'clock."

What could she do? She could not say no, and so she stationed herself where she could hear the door-bell ring, and she determined that she would open the door to him herself; she could not tell the maid to go against orders. It might be unmaidenly, but what had not Austin done for her? She had barely arrived at this decision, not without a pang of troubled conscience, when the ring was heard. Grace flew downstairs and called out:

"All right, Mary, I will open the door," and then almost with deliberation she turned the handle and stood face to face with Austin. He was so much surprised at seeing her that he could only say:

"I beg your pardon, but—"

Grace held out her hand, which Austin, thinking that he was the son of the woman who had wronged her, felt himself unworthy to take.

"Come into the dining-room, Mr. Gordon; Miss Evans is not at home."

"And if she were, she would not see me," said Austin, smiling; then he added seriously: "Do not think I blame her. I have heard how she brought you up."

"Have you? But you must not speak of that time, I don't think I can bear to look back so far; tell me how you found out where we lived."

"I went to Germany, and Gretchen told me."

"Did you go on purpose?" Grace was trying to appear calm and indifferent; she felt as if she were dreaming. What a beautiful dream it was! But she knew she should soon wake.

"Yes, of course; I would have gone much further to find you. But I did not come here to tell you that, but to—say something very different. Miss Gordon, will you trust me as a friend, and believe in me as you once did?"

A blush overspread Grace's face at hearing the old familiar name of Gordon;

then she thought of the woman who was his mother, and who had denied them the right to bear that name. Did he not know this? Yes; for Nan had said that he did, then why should he pain her by using it?

"Please call me Miss Evans," she stammered out. On his side Austin knew not how to tell his news, and he began to feel quite desperate.

"Grace, do you not remember the gardens at Unterberg, and how I told you there that I loved you—no, do not turn away, I want to tell you again that I cannot think differently, that I love you still, now, always, that I cannot forget you in spite of—Do you remember that you told me then that you could never be my wife? I know now why you said so."

"You have no right to question me again," said Grace proudly, regretting her own hasty foolishness. Why had she insisted on seeing him again? Why, even though each moment was a bitter-sweet one to her?

"I have the right because I come here now on purpose to tell you that your reasons are not well founded, that you are believing a great falsehood; but, Grace, I cannot explain everything to you. Will you ever forgive me—forgive us?"

"I don't understand you," said the girl slowly; "and I do not think you know—"

Austin thought, he had prepared Grace enough, though in truth he had only puzzled her, so that now, when he drew out his pocket-book from his breast-pocket, and took out of it a piece of paper, unfolded it, and placed it in Grace's hands, he could never have guessed the effect it would have upon her.

"Will you read that, Miss Gordon?" he said simply, and Grace, taking the paper from him, slowly deciphered the words. As she read, her heart seemed to stop beating; she was forced to hold the back of a chair, and then very slowly she raised her eyes, and looked at Austin; her face was pale as death.

"Where did you find this paper; is it true? I can't understand."

At this instant, two things happened without previous warning. Grace suddenly fell forward in a dead faint, and if Austin had not caught her she would have fallen on the floor. Austin was quite able to carry Grace the few steps which separated him from the sofa; but just as he laid her down, the door opened,

and Miss Evans entered. The expression of her face said a thousand times more than her few words.

"Mr. Gordon, I cannot understand this."

"It was my fault," said Austin, reddening to the roots of his hair, as Miss Evans motioned him aside, and knelt down by Grace.

"Excuses are useless. Will you ring the bell, and then leave my house? To call here in my absence is——"

"Miss Evans, you misunderstand me; if you will allow me, if I might tell Miss Gordon——"

"You will tell Miss Gordon nothing in my house," and as the maid now appeared, Austin was fairly driven from the house; indeed, it would have been a very brave man who could have withstood Miss Evans' severe displeasure.

By the time salts and cold water had helped to bring Grace back to her senses, Austin was far away, and Nan was looking more displeased with her child than she had ever done in her life before.

"Grace, I did not expect this of you."

"Nan, don't be angry. He loves me, and I—I—oh, I can't help it, I love him too. I have all along; I can't forget him, though I have tried to do so."

"No, Grace, you shall not marry that woman's son. You don't know what it means. You don't know."

Grace slowly got up, and put her hands to her head, trying to recollect why it was she was so happy; why Nan's hard words sounded sweet to her; why nothing mattered now. Then a new fear seized hold of her; she was so little used to joy.

"Nan, suppose it is not true. But, no, it is—it is. If you knew him you would understand. He would never have come here if he were not certain. Oh, Nan, Nan!" and Grace flung her arms round her Nan's neck.

"What are you saying, child? What is true? That man's love? My poor child, don't believe in it."

"No, no, that is true, and the other thing. Oh! I felt sure, and yet—yet—Nan, listen. He has the proof. We have the right to the name of——"

Nan's face flushed now; it was her turn to look surprised.

"Nonsense!"

"Oh, it is true. Father never did us that wrong. He wanted to tell me on that last night. He wanted to undo the wrong his silence did us. We are his

children, truly and really, and mother was his wife."

"Then," said Nan, "the Warren is your home, and that woman——"

Nan paused, and she finished the sentence to herself, "that woman knew it."

Grace had never thought of this as the result of the great news. Her eyes looked frightened, and she laid her head on Nan's shoulder.

"No, no. I want nothing. Sibyl and I are quite contented. Oh, Nan! oh, Nan! and you drove him away! Somehow, I think that he did it all. He found it out. I must—I must thank him."

"How could I tell? Besides, I had forbidden him the house. Grace, you are alone to blame. What will our little Sibyl say?" Nan opened the door and called out: "Sibyl, Sibyl, come here."

Sibyl came slowly downstairs. She had lost the elasticity of youth. The blow had fallen too heavily on the over-proud spirit.

Nan went away when Sibyl entered. She could not trust herself further; besides, it was Grace's right to tell. She would do it best.

Grace led Sibyl to the sofa, and drew her sister's fair head on her shoulder.

"Darling," she said, "darling, can you bear to hear something good?"

"I know it, Grace. Mr. Gordon loves you in spite of——"

"No, not in spite. We have a right to our name."

CHAPTER LX. A WILD NIGHT.

"BLOW, blow, thou winter wind." Austin let these words run in his head as the train steamed into Coleham Station. It was a night which seemed to be waging war against humanity. The powers of the elements raged against the weak creature who so proudly and so often uselessly considered himself the lord of creation. The cutting north-easter swept over the great moors, and raised mimic sea-storms in the mighty fir belts that broke the fury of the gale. The station lay low, and was protected from the full blast by the hills themselves and the town; but even here, when Austin alighted on the platform the porter, touching his cap, remarked:

"A very rough night, sir. Is your carriage coming, sir?"

It is wonderful how much the possession of a carriage adds to the respect given to you by a large class of your fellow-creatures. Austin had previously had very little ex-

perience of this special kind of respect, and so he was more conscious of it; to-night it gave him a sudden stab.

"Oh, no. I am not expected. It is a rough night—I can order a fly in the town."

"Yes, sir, at 'The Bush.' Shall I send your portmanteau down?"

A sudden blast of wind swept furiously down the platform and made Austin stagger.

"It must be bad on the moors. Do you think they will let me have a fly?"

The porter readjusted his cap and smiled.

"Oh, yes, sir. It's not so bad by following the lower road, but when you get up near the Warren it's there you'll feel it."

"Leave my portmanteau here, porter. I'll call for it in the fly. Let me see, it's only nine o'clock; I have to see some one in the town before I go home."

Austin gave the man a shilling, with a certain feeling that he would for the last time act up to his position. He smiled a little ironically to himself as he stepped out into the cold, stormy night, and then slightly bending his head to meet the angry wind, he walked on towards Mr. Blackston's office. He became deaf to outward sounds, for he was once more plunged in deep thought. He had arranged his programme, and he must be very careful in going through it. He had to defend his mother's name and his mother's honour, and he had to clear up the mystery once for all. No, not the mystery. There was none for him now; he had gone over the facts so often that he knew the truth, or fancied he knew it, without another word from any one.

It was this terrible fact, this certainty of her guilt, which had made Austin go through an experience the marks of which he would retain to his life's end. He could not but remember that the old bureau had been left in his mother's room by her express desire; that when all the other old things had been sent elsewhere, or hidden in lumber-rooms, this special chest had remained in her room.

Then she had had it moved into Bee's room. Why had she done that? Did she dislike the sight of it in her own chamber, and did she believe that Bee was far too busy to hunt about the old thing? Did she also believe it impossible that the secret drawer would be discovered? Yes, there was no doubt of it. His mother had

known. There was the little bit of fringe Bee had mentioned, the fringe which matched his mother's trimming.

Then Austin mentally proceeded a step further. That diary had gone back into his mother's possession; it had passed through her hands, and it had been given by her to Mr. Blackston. What then? It had not been given as she had found it. Something had been torn out of it, something which was the proof necessary to restore the name and inheritance to Grace and Sibyl Gordon.

Another fierce gust of wind swept over him, and he did not notice it except that from force of habit he paused and turned his back upon it.

His mother did not yet know it. That is, she did not know that the news was announced. He was going to tell her this evening, but first he was going to explain the facts—not the true facts, but some which would serve the purpose—to Mr. Blackston, for fear his mother should say something to persuade him that the truth was not the truth. He wished to tell all those concerned before letting her know. All that sort of confidence was over for ever between them. Here lay the sting of the whole business. His mother! He had loved her so truly, and she had been one of the best of mothers to him. All his life he could think of no period during which she had not done all she could for him; she had denied herself, she had allowed the girls to slave with their dressmaking, all in order that he might have the best education possible, and that his career might not be injured. This thought sent him upon another subject of meditation. How beautifully riches became her; how exquisite she looked in her soft greys and laces; how kind she was to every one, and what a pleasant centre she had made the Warren! And he would have to tell her all that was no more, everything would be swept away, and by his hand. That was the way he was going to repay her for all her life-long devotion and her self-denial. He was going to do that—he, her only son!

He stopped short again, and now he noticed that he was close by "The Bush Inn," and some distance past Mr. Blackston's house.

Should he leave that part of the business to-night and go straight home to the Warren, or should he keep to his programme?

The very idea of "shuffling," as he ex-

pressed it, made him despise himself. He would go through with the business. He would not let one idea turn him back. To think of all the suffering those girls had gone through undid his previous tenderer thoughts. His mother had done that thing, had willingly and wilfully defrauded two defenceless girls of what was their right. With a sudden fury which argued badly for Mr. Blackston's bell-wire, Austin Gordon pulled the shining knob of brass.

"This need not take me long," argued Austin to himself when rather a scared maid appeared.

Mr. Blackston was at home, and in a few minutes the genial man was shaking hands with Austin Gordon, whom he considered "quite the nicest fellow I know, but a little fussy and over-scrupulous. Thinks he has more head on his shoulders than his elders."

"I came about that little red book—that diary," began Austin quickly. Mr. Blackston actually smiled.

"No, now really, Mr. Gordon, you don't mean to tell me that your mind is not yet easy about that unfortunate matter? I should guess that you must have seen the young ladies."

The guess being so near the truth, though in another sense, made Austin look guilty.

"I have seen Miss Gordon for a few moments," he said, with as much dignity as he could put on.

"Just so, and——"

Austin became impatient.

"I went to see her, Mr. Blackston, for a particular reason, and for that same reason I am here to-night."

Mr. Blackston drew his chair nearer the fire.

"I was only joking, of course; your scruples are most——"

"Justifiable," said Austin impatiently, taking a pocket-book from his breast-pocket, and with trembling fingers unfolding the copy of the marriage registry. "Look at this, Mr. Blackston."

The lawyer took the paper, and adjusted a large pair of eyeglasses on the well-defined bridge of his nose. He rose and went a little nearer the large lamp that stood on his knee-hole table. His whole frame of mind changed in a moment, but for all the world he would not have shown this to be the case. He was intensely irritated to think that perhaps, after all, he had been wrong; so irritated that he meant to

keep his present flag up till it must be really pulled down.

"No, now really you don't mean to say that you have brought me a legal bit of paper—a copy, you say?"

"Yes, only a copy—worth a shilling," said Austin. He somehow still felt angry with Mr. Blackston; he accused him of gross carelessness; but for him his mother would not now be in possession of something she had no right to have; but for him his mother would not be guilty.

"Ay, yes, these copies sometimes have no originals." He read it through and then returned to his seat.

"Did Miss Evans get this? She is capable of everything. She had a passionate, unreasoning love for those two girls. It made her really quite rade to your mother."

"Miss Evans has nothing to do with it. The truth is simple. I was looking over a registry book in an old City church, and found it. Nothing more strange than that."

"But that is strange, Mr. Gordon, very strange, that you, of all people, should be looking there, and that you should find it!"

Austin was now quite calm; he saw that he was not going through his programme. He was again himself.

"Yes, it is strange, but true. I was surprised myself. By the way, in that little diary there was nothing to point to—to any church where the——"

"Nothing, nothing, I assure you. Very strange. And you have seen this. It must be sifted. There may be two persons of the same name."

"No, that is quite impossible. Everything is right. I have been to Miss Gordon."

"Good Heaven!" said the lawyer, wiping his brow, and then the train of thought seemed at once to carry him back to James Gordon. "It seems incredible. I can hardly believe it. It was just such another wild night as this upon which poor James Gordon died. That man must have had an iron will. Imagine how many years that poor little woman lingered on an outcast from society, and she was his wife all the time! Do you see, Mr. Gordon, what that man must have felt and suffered? He told the lie at first and stuck to it. His father would have disinherited him, and James Gordon preferred making his wife suffer rather than his own pocket. Well, well, it makes one believe in the sins of the father, you know—it does indeed."

Austin winced.

His mother was guilty; was he to begin a long expiation of her sins? He rose quickly.

"Well, I only came to show you this; you will know what steps to take."

"You have told Miss Gordon? It was a little premature, I should say."

"She has been kept out of her rights long enough, I should think."

"But to make sure——"

"I have made sure, and I must say—will you forgive me for saying it?—that if every endeavour had been made at first, if the certificate had been advertised for, we should not now find ourselves in the very unpleasant position of being where we have no business to be. The consequences to us are very serious. I conclude we are responsible for all money spent, and you know, Mr. Blackston, we are poor people."

"Oh, legally responsible, perhaps, but——"

"Surely that is enough for us; it must be paid back."

"Among relations—friends?"

"Friends!" repeated Austin scornfully.

"I don't know that that is the name the Miss Gordons apply to us."

"That is part of the James Gordon pride. The youngest one, Sibyl—very handsome she promised to be—she was very proud, very; but a thoroughly nice girl, too, you know."

The lawyer remembered that now he was their lawyer without his having stirred a finger in the matter; he was their man of business, for now they had a right to one just as they had a right to the name of Gordon.

"But surely, Mr. Gordon, you won't go home in this gale? Let me offer you a bed."

"No, thank you; I will go back to the Warren. The 'Bush' fly horses are accustomed to all weathers."

Austin tried to be light-hearted now. He wished to begin to deceive the lawyer. That secret—his mother's guilt—must be buried for ever. He had managed the lawyer, and he had written to Bee telling her that he was taking steps about the diary, feeling sure that it would prove something. That would ease her mind, and she was too happy to be very particular about details. The rest was going to be between himself and his mother.

"You really will go?"

"Yes, thank you; I don't mind weather. You will take what steps you like."

"Yes, yes—most strange. By the way, I should like to consult Dr. Smith. He was a friend, you know, of that poor Mrs. James."

"By all means. Good night."

"Good night. By Jove, what wind! Just such a night!"

THE ANDES OF THE EQUATOR.

To struggle with snow and ice on Alpine heights under the equator is an experience possible only in Central Africa and in Central America. But the highest point in Equatorial Africa—Kilima Njaro—has not yet been scaled, while the highest point in Equatorial America—Chimborazo—has been more than once trodden or claimed to have been trodden.

Why should men aspire to climb such heights, and what good is to be obtained by reaching the summit of the highest snow-clad peak under the equator? Well, wherever there are mountains, there will mountaineers find attraction. Into the fascination of mountaineering we need not enter; those who have experienced it need no explanation, and those who have not will not understand. But in climbing to great heights many services may be rendered to science—services which the mere member of a mountaineering club may neglect, but which the true scientist will travel thousands of miles and undergo immeasurable danger and discomfort to perform.

One of the most remarkable of recent mountain expeditions was that of Mr. Edward Whymper among the Andes, the main object of which was to observe the effects of low atmospheric pressure upon the human constitution, and to attain the greatest possible height in order to experience it. In other words, Mr. Whymper wanted to test the reality of what is called mountain sickness, to study its symptoms, and to discover its causes. For that certain physical inconveniences of a more or less serious character are felt by those who have attained a height over fourteen thousand feet above the sea, has been often enough demonstrated. Cases have happened in all parts of the world, to men of all nations and all degrees. The reports of such experiences necessarily differ in detail, but certain leading features characterise them all. The explorer at great heights has always exhibited some or all of the following

symptoms: nausea and vomiting, violent headache, feverishness, hemorrhage, lassitude, depression, weakness. If the conditions which produce the illness are prolonged, death is supposed to ensue, and in any case cure has only been effected by descent into lower atmospheres.

Are these symptoms due to reduced atmospheric pressure, to local causes, or to individual weakness succumbing to the excessive fatigue of prolonged climbing? Is it possible for men to live at such a height as, say, nineteen thousand feet, for a length of time necessary to carry on sustained and difficult scientific work? These are the questions to which Mr. Whymper sought an answer, convinced that if life cannot be sustained in moderate comfort at nineteen thousand five hundred feet or so, it will be impossible for man to attain the highest points on the earth's surface. At the time when he desired to enter upon the study, the Himalayas—where are the highest summits in the world—were closed, or at all events were unsuitable for scientific investigation, by reason of the construction of a scientific frontier then in process. The next highest ranges, those of the Andes of Chili and Bolivia, were equally debarred through the disturbances of the Chili-Peruvian War. The next best region available, therefore, was that of the Republic of Ecuador, in which are the high Andes of Chimborazo and Cotopaxi, and other giants.

To Ecuador, therefore, Mr. Whymper directed his steps, arriving at Guayaquil, the chief port, on the ninth of December, 1879, prepared for a long Alpine—or Andine—sojourn. "To attain results," he says, "which might be of a more or less conclusive character, it appeared to me that it would be necessary to eliminate the complications arising from fatigue, privations, cold, and insufficiency or unsuitability of food; that the persons concerned should have been previously accustomed to mountain work; that the heights to be dealt with ought to be in excess of those at which it had been generally admitted serious inconveniences had occurred; and that preparations should be made for a prolonged sojourn at such elevations."*

Mr. Whymper therefore provided himself with two experienced Swiss guides—the cousins Carrel—with one of whom he had made many Alpine expeditions, with an ample

supply of barometers, aneroids, and scientific instruments, and with a stock of provisions carefully selected and packed for mountain transport. He was also well armed with letters from and to scientific and political friends, and, receiving a sort of Government welcome, was able to travel through Ecuador unarmed except with passports, which were never exhibited. But he was careful not to meddle with things which did not concern him or the object he had in view; to avoid political and personal controversy; to respect the customs of the country; and to preserve a rigid policy of non-intervention.

At Guayaquil, which is the chief port and second city in Ecuador, the trade of which received a great impetus by the war between Chili and Peru, a stay of a few days was necessary to arrange the route and provide mules and attendants in advance. But these preliminaries completed, a start was made along the "royal road" (a mud track) which leads from Guayaquil to Quito, the capital, and which also led in the direction of Chimborazo, the first height to be attacked.

It was not actually sighted until the twenty-first of December, and then revealed the fact, previously unknown to the travellers, that it had two summits, two snowy domes, which from a distance appeared to be nearly equal in height. Humboldt's Travels only mention one summit, and, moreover, Humboldt said that he never saw any glaciers in Ecuador. The whole of the upper part of the mountain now sighted by Mr. Whymper was nearly covered with glaciers.

One of the summits, which, on closer inspection, appeared the higher, was marked off for assault, and the selection of Chimborazo as a mountain for the investigation of the effects of low pressure was justified by the comparative easy access which it affords to very high altitudes, so that the effects of fatigue need not complicate the phenomena. However, Mr. Whymper soon found that some of his predecessors could not possibly have attained the altitudes they have recorded, and that the ascent was not to be made without a considerable amount of labour. Neither he nor his Swiss attendants had previously climbed as high as sixteen thousand feet, and neither of them had ever experienced the least symptom of mountain sickness. But this is what happened to them about an hour after reaching the second of a chain of camps they were forming up the mountain, at a

* "Travels amongst the Great Andes of the Equator." By Edward Whymper. London: John Murray.

height of sixteen thousand six hundred and sixty-four feet above the sea:

"We were feverish, had intense headaches, and were unable to satisfy our desire for air except by breathing with open mouths. This naturally parched the throat, and produced a craving for drink which we were unable to satisfy, partly from the difficulty in obtaining it and partly from trouble in swallowing it. When we got enough we could only sip, and not to save ourselves could we have taken a quarter of a pint at a draught. Before a mouthful was down, we were obliged to breathe and gasp again, until our throats were as dry as ever. Besides having our normal rate of breathing largely accelerated, we found it impossible to sustain life without every now and then giving spasmodic gulps, just like fishes when taken out of water. Of course there was no inclination to eat; but we wished to smoke, and found that our pipes almost refused to burn, for they, like ourselves, wanted more oxygen."

This condition lasted all night and all the next day, but relief was obtained after repeated doses of chlorate of potash; at any rate, two of them who took the doses recovered, but then so did the third—one of the Swiss guides—who refused all medicines. Mr. Perring, the English interpreter engaged at Guayaquil, did not, strange to say, experience any of the ill effects which prostrated these hardy and experienced mountaineers.

The headaches and feverishness having passed off by the third day, although difficulty of respiration remained, a move was made upwards again and a third camp pitched at a height of seventeen thousand two hundred and eighty-five feet. Finally, early in the morning of the third of January, 1880, the grand assault was made on the summit; but as a path had to be cut round a wall of cliffs and across glaciers, it was not until the following day that the top was gained. At eleven a.m. on the fourth a height of twenty thousand feet was reached, and the Pacific was sighted for a moment through the clouds. Then came a tract of very soft snow, which involved hours of weary labour, as it had to be flattened down and crawled over on all-fours, it was so soft and deep.

After three hours of it the Swiss guides were offered the choice of persevering or retreating. They elected to go on, and the struggle with the snow was resumed.

"In another hour and a half we got to the foot of the western summit, and as the

slopes steepened the snow became firmer again. We arrived on the top of it about a quarter to four in the afternoon, and then had the mortification of finding that it was the lower of the two. There was no help for it; we had to descend to the plateau, to resume the flogging, wading, and floundering, and to make for the highest point, and there again, when we got on to the dome, the snow was reasonably firm, and we arrived upon the summit of Chimborazo standing upright like men, instead of grovelling, as we had been doing for the previous five hours, like beasts of the field. The wind blew hard from the north-east, and drove the light snow before it viciously. We were hungry, wet, numbed, and wretched, laden with instruments which could not be used. With much trouble the mercurial barometer was set up; one man grasped the tripod to keep it firm, while the other stood to windward holding up a poncho to give a little protection. The mercury fell to 14.100 inches, with a temperature of twenty degrees Fahrenheit, and lower it would not go."

This reading was half an inch higher than expected, and in a rough computation on the spot the height of Chimborazo was determined at twenty thousand six hundred and eight feet. A revised computation later yielded twenty thousand five hundred and forty-five feet, or nearly one thousand feet below Humboldt's estimate.

A flag was planted on the apex of the dome, and then a rush was made through enveloping clouds to reach safer ground again before dark.

Mr. Whympster had intended spending some weeks in thoroughly exploring the summits and slopes of Chimborazo, and in a variety of scientific experiments; but one of the Swiss guides had got frost-bitten in both feet, and a hurried march had to be made downwards and along the road to Quito, in order to get medical advice. This upset of plans was disappointing, but Chimborazo was returned to later on, and meanwhile fresh ground was broken, and other heights were scaled.

As to the Chimborazo visit, however, the following is a summary:

The residence on the mountain covered seventeen days, viz.: one night at fourteen thousand three hundred and seventy-five feet; ten days and nights at sixteen thousand six hundred and sixty-four feet; and six days and nights at seventeen thousand two hundred and eighty-five

feet—which is probably the greatest length of time at which any one has remained continuously at such heights. Besides these points of residence, Mr. Whympier was three times as high as eighteen thousand five hundred and twenty-eight feet, as well as once to the summit, twenty thousand five hundred and forty-five feet. From the twenty-seventh of December to the fourth of January he did not experience a higher atmospheric pressure than sixteen and a half inches, and for six consecutive days of that period the pressure was never higher than sixteen inches. In these seventeen days mountain sickness had been experienced, as we have related, and it was found that the more acute symptoms disappeared as the party became accustomed to the pressure, and that even higher ascents did not produce a recurrence of them. Whether they would have returned after a long duration on the extreme summit, there was not the opportunity of testing, owing to the collapse of the Swiss guide, Louis Carrel.

The Andes of Ecuador may be said to run in three ranges. First, the Pacific Range, rising from the coast lowlands to a height of fourteen thousand feet and upwards. Next, the Chimborazo Range, which we have already seen, and then the Altar Range, which sends out spurs towards the east. After reaching Ambato, a town of some five thousand inhabitants, described as an oasis in a desert of pumice stone and volcanic dust, where the invalid was placed in charge of a doctor, Mr. Whympier and his remaining attendant proceeded to explore the heights within reach.

Here is a sketch of life by the way :

"Though travelling for the sake of viewing their country is a thing unpractised by Ecuadorians, we saw occasionally some one a little out of the common, going, perhaps, on a visit to a neighbouring farm, and such a person was generally worth examination. When got up correctly, he wears a so-called Panama hat, a straw hat which will roll up and can be put in the pocket, and may cost anything between ten shillings and ten pounds. To take care of this precious article, he puts on a white outer casing; but as this would get spoiled by rain, he covers it with oilskin, so that he has three hats one on top of the other. To protect his eyes he ought to wear a pair of blue goggles. Outside he displays a poncho of superior quality, and underneath it there are several of a coarser kind.

What he may wear in the way of trousers cannot be said, for they are covered up by buskins made from the skin of some wild animal, and his feet are nearly invisible. If seen, one most likely observes that his toes are peeping through his shoes. But for all deficiencies thereabouts he makes up in the heel by his spurs, which are gigantic. If he is properly fitted out, he carries at the buttonhole a carved drinking cup, and at his side a tremendous sheath-knife, or macheta, an article that is supposed to be necessary in clearing away branches. A person of distinction will be strong in his whip, which will have a wrought-iron handle, as it is found that that description does not break so readily on the head of a mule as a wooden one, and he will carry a guitar at his saddle-bow."

Such a person is accounted a great cavalier, and if only decently mounted may aspire to marry any woman in the land. And the women? Well, Mr. Whympier does not tell us very much about them; but here is a little picture which presented itself as he was leaving Latacunga, another small town on the road to Quito:

"The favourable impression which was created by the propriety of Bagnero's hotel was utterly destroyed by what we saw upon leaving this town. At the door of every house on the sunny side of the street leading to the bridge the ladies of Latacunga were basking in the warmth. Mothers had their children reposing in their laps, and daughters seemed to be caressing their parents. To the non-observant they would have formed sweet pictures of parental and filial affection. A glance was enough to see that all this assemblage were engaged in eating the vermin which they picked out of each other's hair. According to the old historians, this habit was established in the country before the Spanish conquest. It is practised now by the hybrid Ecuadorian race as much as by the pure Indians. There were more than two dozen groups on one side of this single street engaged in this revolting occupation, which they carried on without shame in the most public manner. Though I shook the dust of this town off my feet, it was impossible to forget the ladies of Latacunga, for the same disgusting sight was forced upon our attention throughout the whole of the interior."

The mountains are more interesting than the people—at least, Mr. Whympier has made them so, for he went to study the one, and to have as little as possible to do with the other.

The imposing figures on the maps naturally lead to the supposition that Ecuadorian mountain scenery must be exceptionally fine. But this, we are informed, is not the case, for several reasons. The Ecuadorian Andes have no rugged chains like the European Alps. Much of the interior country is hilly rather than mountainous, and there are long stretches of barren moorland, and large undulating plains. These plains are about nine thousand feet high, and it is out of them that the mountains rise, not abruptly, but so gradually that one may ride on donkey-back with ease to a height of thirteen thousand feet or more. Very interesting, however, are the physical aspects of these mountain masses, and the fauna and flora, of which Mr. Whympers collected so many specimens at various altitudes, that a whole volume is filled with the notes of scientific experts upon his collection. On the slopes of Corazin—fifteen thousand eight hundred and seventy feet high—for instance, we find a zoologist's paradise:

"Pumas and bears ranged over the high, rugged ground; foxes, weasels, and opossums dwelt on the lower slopes; and down in the basin, butterflies above, below, and around, now here, now there, by many turns and twists displaying the brilliant tessellation of their under sides. Some congregated in clusters on the banks of streams or in muddy places, while others sailed in companies over the open plains. May-flies and dragon-flies danced in the sunlight; lizards darted across the paths, and legions of spiders pervaded the grass, many very beautiful, frosted-silver backs, like the saltigrades, who took a few steps and then gave a leap. There were crickets in infinite numbers, and flies innumerable, from slim daddy-long-legs to ponderous black, hairy fellows known to science as *Dejeania*; hymenopterous insects in profusion," and so on.

As soon as the crippled guide was sufficiently recovered, Mr. Whympers turned his attention to the great volcano, Cotopaxi, the next highest mountain in Ecuador to Chimborazo. It was reported that there was a large slope of ash at the apex of its cone, and on this he proposed to encamp, say at the height of about nineteen thousand five hundred feet, for as long a time as could be endured without inconvenience. Unless residence and exploration can be carried on at that height, it is idle to dream of ever surmounting the highest of the Himalayas.

This mountain has been scaled before; but previous travellers had remained a very short time on the apex, and have given divergent accounts of the appearance of the crater. By camping near the summit, Mr. Whympers hoped to be able to view the interior of the crater by night, and he had the good fortune to enjoy this remarkable and probably unique experience.

Cotopaxi is described as an "ideal volcano." That is to say, it is not of the spasmodic sort, given to occasional outbursts separated by long sleeps, but it is in a state of perpetual activity, and has been so ever since it has been known to observers. Some loftier mountains exist which were once volcanoes, and some volcanoes still active yield greater quantities of lava; but Cotopaxi is the highest known volcano in active operation. It is situated some forty-three geographical miles south of the equator, and thirty geographical miles south-east of Quito. All the streams which descend its northern side fall ultimately into the River Esmeraldas and thence into the Pacific Ocean; all those that descend the eastern side drop into unknown and unexplored country, but are believed to make their way into the River Napo. The towns and houses nearest to the volcano are safer than those at considerable distances, as experience has proved.

The last great eruption was on the twenty-sixth June, 1877, and the first intelligence of it reached Europe through the ejected matter falling upon steamers running between Panama and Guayaquil, at a distance of two hundred miles from the mountain. This eruption was witnessed from Quito and other towns at a distance. The summit glowed the night before, and at Quito it began to get dusk next morning at eight o'clock, becoming black as midnight by midday. Men in the streets declared that they could not see their hands held before their faces. This, of course, was the effect of the ejected matter floating in the atmosphere and blown over the town. Those clear of it saw the molten lava bubbling and smoking over the lip of the crater, like the froth of a pot boiling over; then an immense cloud of steam and smoke, accompanied by moans rising to a terrific roar, and followed by a deluge of water, ice, mud, and rocks, rushing down the slopes and leaving a desert behind it. The country through which this deluge had passed was still a wilderness when Mr. Whympers made for the mountain.

Humboldt, on his famous voyage, did not reach the crater, as he thought the feat was impossible. The first person to reach the summit is believed to have been Dr. W. Reiss, the German traveller, in 1873, who was followed by Dr. Stübel, of Dresden, in 1873; by Dr. T. Wolff, an Ecuadorian resident, in 1877; and by Herr Von Thielmann in 1878. Mr. Whympers would thus be the fifth explorer to set foot upon this awful summit. He was certainly the first to spend any time there, and the first to make a visit by night.

Acting again upon the plan of forming a line of camps up the mountain, the foot of the great ash slope of the summit was reached on the morning of the eighteenth of February. At the foot of this slope the last of the baggage was deposited, and then there was a scramble up to the rim of the crater. It was nearly filled with smoke and steam, so that the opposite side and the bottom were concealed, but an idea of the general shape was obtained.

"A few minutes after our arrival a roar from the bottom told us that 'the animal'—Carrel's term for the volcano—was alive. It had been settled beforehand that every man was to shift for himself if an eruption occurred, and that all our belongings were to be abandoned. When we heard the roar, there was an 'it is time to be off' expression clearly written on all our faces; but before a word could be uttered we found ourselves enveloped only in a cloud of cool and quite unobjectionable steam, and we concluded to stop."

The next thing to do was to select a location for the summit camp, and for this a ledge had to be carefully scooped out on the ashen slope at an altitude of nineteen thousand five hundred feet. It was here that the question was to be tested whether the diminution of pressure would bring about a repetition of the Chimborazo experiences, or whether the party were now sufficiently habituated to low pressure as to be able to remain some time without being rendered incapable. Slight headaches and a feeling of lassitude were the only effects of a stay of twenty-six hours on the summit.

When night set in, the ascent was made again, and Mr. Whympers, secured by a rope, crawled to the edge of the crater and peered into the unknown. What he saw can best be described in his own words:

"The vapours no longer concealed any part of the vast crater, though they were there, drifting as before. We saw an am-

phitheatre two thousand three hundred feet in diameter from north to south, and one thousand six hundred and fifty feet from east to west, with a rugged and irregular crest, notched and cracked, surrounded by cliffs, by perpendicular and even overhanging precipices, mixed with steep slopes, some bearing snow and others apparently encrusted with sulphur. Cavernous recesses belched forth smoke, the sides of cracks and chasms no more than half-way down shone with ruddy light; and so it continued on all sides, right down to the bottom, precipice alternating with slope, and the fiery fissures becoming more numerous as the bottom was approached. At the bottom, probably one thousand two hundred feet below us and towards the centre, there was a ruddy circular spot, about one-tenth of the diameter of the crater, the pipe of the volcano, its channel of communication with lower regions, filled with incandescent if not molten lava, glowing and burning, with flames travelling to and fro over its surface, and scintillations scattering as from a wood fire, lighted by tongues of flickering flame which issued from the cracks in the surrounding slopes. At intervals of about half an hour the volcano regularly blew off steam. It rose in jets with great violence from the bottom of the crater, and boiled over the lip, continually enveloping us. The noise on these occasions resembled that which we hear when a large ocean steamer is blowing off steam. It appeared to be pure, and we saw nothing thrown out, yet in the morning the tent was almost black with matter which had been ejected."

Mr. Whympers does not feel able to frame an explanation of these outbursts if it is assumed that fluid molten lava filled the pipe. He conjectures that the lava in the pipe leading from the bottom of the crater, although intensely hot, was cooling and settling down, closing fissures and imprisoning steam that desired to escape, which presently acquired sufficient force to burst through the barriers and effect temporary relief. Steam, at any rate, plays a leading part in the operations of Cotopaxi. At a later period, when on the summit of another Andes (Cayambe) sixty miles to the north-east of Cotopaxi, the great volcano was observed to eject a tremendous volume of steam, which rose to the height of a mile, and spread over a width of several miles. This cloud Mr. Whympers estimated to be a continuous body of not less than sixty cubic miles. Had such a body of steam not found

such easy vent, the consequence would have been an explosion even mightier than that of the mighty catastrophe at Krakatoa some years ago.

Cotopaxi, we are assured, shows no signs of approaching decrepitude, and is likely to remain for centuries to come the highest active volcano in the world.

The stay on the summit of this mountain demonstrated that the human frame can become habituated to low pressure, so that active, although not laborious, employment could be engaged in at over nineteen thousand feet. But the test was for twenty-six hours only, and it is by no means certain that if the stay had been prolonged the condition of the party would have remained equally sound.

We cannot follow Mr. Whympers in his ascents of a number of other giants—all huge, although smaller than the two we have dealt with—nor is this the place to notice his zoological and botanical researches. But the general conclusions of one of the most memorable mountain expeditions on record may be briefly summarised.

The various affections which have been collectively termed mountain sickness are caused in two ways: first, by lessening the value of the air that can be inspired in any given time; and, second, by causing the air or gas within the body to expand and to press upon the internal organs. The first causes are permanent so long as the conditions remain, and are aggravated the more pressure is reduced as higher altitudes are attained. The second causes are temporary, and pass away when equilibrium is restored between the internal and external pressure. They may be fatal under very large and rapid reductions in pressure, but they may be minimised by cautious and gradual ascents, and by careful watch over the pulse and temperature. The effects on respiration, however, are inevitable, and Mr. Whympers's experiences convince him that they will always impose limitation upon the range of man. The highest Himalayas may yet be scaled; but those who strive to reach the loftiest summits on earth, as yet untrodden, must be prepared to find the difficulty of breathing increasing the higher they rise, and accompanied by a constant diminution of physical power and endurance.

Mr. Whympers has taken twelve years to prepare his remarkable volumes, with their beautiful illustrations and valuable scientific tables. The delay is well justified by the result.

THE TWILIGHT OF A LIFE.

A COMPLETE STORY.

It was not my first visit to that strange and distant world; but a change had come over it since I saw it last. The race which inhabited it had aged and altered; and this was not all; the planet itself had now passed its prime as a sphere for the evolution of conscious creatures. The climate was no longer what it used to be, even within my recollection of it; there had been repeated failures in those products of the soil on which the people lived, and the material prosperity of the whole population had suddenly decreased.

They were a remarkable people, intelligent and full of ingenuity, but without great physical strength. They had long exercised their intellectual faculties in the endeavour to live easily, to get much pleasure with little trouble; and it now seemed that they lacked the energy to cope with the difficulties of their new circumstances. They had no enthusiasms, and few illusions. Long ago they seemed to have drunk the dregs of the knowledge of life and its narrow possibilities; the strength of an unlimited hope was no more theirs. They had been, for generations, a selfish as well as a peaceable people, tolerating one another with a sort of contemptuous indifference. Their great skill—inherited from ancestors of long ago—had lessened disease among them; their wide knowledge had convinced them of the miseries of war, as well as of poverty and pestilence; they had ceased to quarrel about mere ideas, religious or otherwise; their individual selfishness—the whole people being exceptionally well-informed—took a constructive instead of a destructive form, so that the regulations of their life produced a much higher general level of comfort than is found among many more virtuous nations.

But their prosperity was the result of inherited information and of a slow and cautious adaptation. The trouble that came upon them at once found them without resources. If ever there had been any inferior races in this world of theirs, they must have long since disappeared. It was now inhabited only by one nation, speaking one language, and dwelling in a single zone of the planet, where the climate had hitherto been healthy and productive. After an interval of half a generation since my earlier visit, I hardly

recognised the place or the people; I found physical misery instead of material prosperity, sullen anger instead of cynical politeness. No one seemed to know what to do, and few were willing to do even the things that they knew.

It was a crisis which they could only survive by a complete change of life, by goading themselves to painful effort, and bracing themselves to endure hardship and suffering; and nowhere amongst them was the necessary heroic element to be found. They regarded one another now with jealousy and suspicion; science was proving an insufficient servant for their wants; and their minds were returning to the ideas of rapine and violence. While there was enough for all, they had found the greatest ease in a mode of life based on civil contract; but with a time of prolonged scarcity the long-stifled instinct of lawless struggle was returning to them. They had lost the habit of fighting; or else I think they must have broken into fierce battle before I visited them the second time. It would be a terrible battle when it came, each for himself and against his neighbour. As I looked into their altered faces I thought that I understood them better than they, as yet, understood themselves. Presently they would be slaying one another for the sake of food, of clothing, of anything else that they might happen to want. This would be easier than a struggle with the forces of nature, suddenly become hostile to them. The first outbreak of violence, however it might occur, would be the signal for general anarchy.

Trouble develops, in the hearts of most men, an instinct of hatred and a feeling of isolation. Unless there is a common enemy towards whom to turn the channel of anger thus originated, or a great leader by whom they are willing to be guided to a common effort, it breaks up communities as the frost divides the rocks. It works secretly, and in hidden places, so that the ruin is already accomplished before it is anywhere apparent. Civil war was brooding now over this unfortunate people, but as yet they knew not whom to hate, against whom to be angry. Their first thought turned, strangely enough, towards the one man among them who lived a life of absolute unselfishness.

Yet it was not so strange as it seems. His life was a rebuke to theirs, and his wisdom made them ashamed of their present foolishness. Long, long indeed,

throughout the course of centuries, they had understood that their prosperity depended on knowledge, and they had striven to be accurate and complete in all learning which might be of use to them. While knowledge serves us we love and praise her; but when she grows beyond our moulding and makes herself a strong and haughty mistress, giving us unpalatable commands which we cannot modify to suit the limits of our convenience, then we reject and hate her under the name of bitter, inevitable truth. These people had cherished an inherited knowledge until it proved insufficient; then the man of whom I have spoken came out of his solitude to preach to them a wider wisdom.

He spoke to them of effort and of unselfishness; he told them to strive, to endure, and to help one another; the conquest of the new and hard conditions of their life—so he said to them—must begin by a conquest of their own weaknesses. Then, indeed, it might be that out of trouble vanquished they should reap a great reward. They would gain new personal qualities by the loss of easy circumstances; they would be enriched mentally by their physical poverty; they would be ennobled and strengthened by suffering manfully met.

The men listened to him, and after a little time they hated him for what he had told them. He was wiser than any of them. They had long gone to him for lost details of science, for advice on matters of practical difficulty; and now this was the answer he gave to the new enigma of their life. He told them to do that which was repugnant to their nature, which their flesh abhorred; and their dislike and resistance to the truth he had uttered made them hate the utterer. It was as if he had forced the enigma upon them, instead of finding out the only solution of it. Has not this often been the fate of the wise men of our own world? It is not kings alone who have slain the ambassador bringing to them the unwelcome tidings of danger which it is necessary, for safety's sake, to recognise.

This people had no religion and few superstitions. But after the wilful rejection of the truth superstitions were certain to arise, and it was natural that these should attach themselves readily to the man who had aroused their anger. He was unlike the rest of them, and the conditions of his life did not seem to be the same as theirs. He appeared to exist only for the good of

others, and he never refused help to those who were in need. The limit of his power was unknown; but his knowledge certainly exceeded that of any other inhabitant of his planet. His age was also wrapped in mystery, and he seemed to enjoy a strange immunity from disease and death. He gave wealth to no one, but as he never refused to any one the help needed for the moment, his resources were regarded as practically infinite. He had hitherto escaped envy because of the simple and even the hard life which he appeared to lead. He sought no pleasure for himself, and abstained from the most ordinary comforts. There were none who were attached to him by any personal love, or who devoted to him any personal care. His secrets were his own and his sorrows also; those near whom he lived understood them not, and would not have sympathised even if they had understood.

If they had been a superstitious people they would have worshipped him; if they had been a grateful people they would have loved him; as it was, they used him at need and despised him always. He was an unprofitable mystery to them. He seemed, so far as they could perceive, to have knowledge, power, safety beyond their own, combined with an absolute devotion to the welfare of everybody but himself. If these conditions of his existence were voluntary, they were, to the men whom his wisdom served, proofs of a folly which they had no desire to imitate.

He had, so it was rumoured, once lived in their midst. Now his dwelling was remote from theirs; they had to cross a desert to reach it, and in a cavern in the desert he dwelt alone. He seemed ever impressed by a deep sadness. He gave the knowledge they asked for, but the deeper wisdom, the larger help which he yearned to offer them, these were things they did not want. Only on rare occasions did he go forth among them and speak to them of his own accord. On the last occasion the people had waxed wroth even before he left them, and bade him keep his unwelcome wisdom for those who desired to meet misery half-way.

After he had gone they began to speak of him as we should speak of a magician, and to say that he was using his strange powers to their hurt.

"He desires to make himself a tyrant among us," so the young men said; "he is angry because we have always refused to live as he would have us do, and to give

up the pleasant ways of our fathers. He desires to make us like unto himself, for whom life has no delight; so that even envious Death passes him by, seeing that there is no good thing left to take from him. Eating and drinking, frolic and idleness, the kisses of women and the laughter of wits—these are not for him and never have been; and from us also he would snatch them. Therefore, because we will not listen to him, he is bringing this blight upon us, that we may fall at his feet and beg him to make us his slaves. When beforetime has there been a trouble of which he could not tell us the remedy? For his own purpose he is silent now, or speaks to us of that which our souls hate. Toil, abstinence, patience, long-suffering, these are the companions he offers to us; these are the treasures he brings to us out of his secret places. He has kept in his own stores the piled-up knowledge of our forefathers, the gathered heaps of their wealth. Shall he dole them out to us at his pleasure? Are they not our own to demand from him when we will?"

As the multitude pondered over these sayings of the young men their wrath grew greater; for the madness of misery was coming upon them, the blindness of those who hate to see, and they were beginning to think that they could slay the truth they feared with the utterer of it. A secret despair was also creeping over them; they would not face the long trouble of the future, and they were ready to snatch instead a respite for the moment. If this man had knowledge which would serve them for the hour, what right had he to withhold it in favour of that which was to work more slowly? If he had wealth hidden away, why could they not force it from him at their need?

The wisdom of the community was breaking up into individual greediness. No one paused to consider that the old man could possess no hoards which would serve them in continued and universal scarcity; that they were not passing through a time of temporary need, when temporary help was all they required; that they were, on the contrary, at the beginning of a new epoch, in which they could only prosper by a fresh adaptation of themselves to fresh conditions. They refused to understand the situation. They clamoured for more of a circulating medium, when there would soon be no substantial good to circulate. Easy work would not

bring them what they wanted; therefore they longed to buy—to buy. Soon there would be none who had any food to sell. "But if I can survive, what matter about the others?" This was what each was silently saying to himself.

They sent an embassy to the old man, demanding another sort of knowledge, and also a store of wealth to meet the nation's needs. But he answered them: "What I have ye will not; and that which ye will is not mine to give to you."

Then they said: "Either he lies, or he has not the power he would have us believe. We will compel another answer." So they began to go out in a great crowd to seek him, and the crowd grew ever larger, until the desert was full of it. As they talked together, blindly and foolishly, desiring blindness and fearing wisdom, their folly and their anger increased even with their numbers, until I saw that the madness which dogs the steps of every angry multitude had come upon them. They must satisfy their wrath with blood and who could stay them? Yet it seemed to me, I knew not why, that the lonely old man was safe from any hurt at their hands.

At the sound of their raging he came out to meet them, and stood before his cavern bareheaded and alone. A compassionate wonder lighted his wan features, and the majesty of his bearing was such that the front ranks of the crowd stood still and waited.

But when he spoke to them, and asked them what they sought of him, the smothered fury broke forth, and they burst out into wild and incoherent threats and demands, mingled with strange accusations. For a moment he was surprised and bewildered; he had been secretly despised before, but never openly rebuked or insulted. Then he gathered his voice into a great volume of sound, and spoke so that they all could hear him.

"What I can give ye desire not. Your salvation can come only through your own hearts; and these ye have shut against me. Because ye will not listen, sorrow, and separation, and struggle, and famine, pain and want in your lifetime, and in your dying the slow weariness of solitude and neglect, all these evils shall come upon you. Ye have opened your gates wide and called to them to enter in. Ye have turned wisdom out into the streets and bid her perish there alone; and it was she who held the key of the city in her hand, and would have kept the people safe.

But now the wife must hate her husband, the mother shall starve her child, and the brother and sister slay one another. For ye are broken into pieces, and are not a nation any more, but must live each for himself, and by the death of one who was his friend."

Then they made answer:

"If this is your wisdom, we will have none of it. Bring out instead your treasures, that we may share them among us."

"If I had the treasure which ye seek," so he replied to them boldly, "I would not give it into your hands. It would be as poison now to the life of the people, sick already with languor and long ease. Rouse yourselves, brace yourselves, and labour shall give you what gold cannot. Effort shall bind you together, but barren spoil must breed warfare and dissension. I would not, if I could, give you what ye ask for. I would not cast tumult among you, and hasten the trouble that is waiting at your heels for its opportunity."

He was not afraid of them, as he stood there alone; he had no desire to conciliate them. He continued to hurl at them the truths that they hated, and they were wrought up now to a pitch of wild fury. Would they rush upon him and slay him? Could they do so if they desired it? This I knew not; I waited only to see. It was not for me to step between them and their victim; my strength would have counted as nothing if I had. And he did not desire any help from me; he watched them without fear or anger. I, too, watched, and wondered why they waited, and what force, or what fear, held them back.

As I so watched I saw a change come over the old man's face—a light of surprise, of appeal, of hope—and I became aware that a third person had come upon the scene, and held the balance between accusers and accused.

The crowd was ignorant of the presence that restrained it. With sullen and lowering countenances, the people stood and gazed on the man who had loved them, and whom they hated. But I, through my sympathy with him, as it seemed, could see the things that he saw, and which were hidden from their eyes. Between him and the angry multitude stood the Angel of Death, shaped like a man, with black wings like a raven's dropping from his shoulders. His shining eyes were keen, but not unkindly, and, as he leant upon his sword, he kept the murmuring people at bay with the force of his unseen countenance. Once he drew his

sword from its sheath, felt the edge of it, and smiled as he replaced it; for he loved and pitied the man who had defied him for so many years, and he would gladly have brought to him the only gift in his power, which includes all others; but the word of consent was not spoken yet, and he waited for it.

Then the old man himself threw out his hands protestingly to him and cried:

"Why should I live any longer, since this people for whom alone I lived desire me to die? May I not take death at their hands as the one gift I ask for, in return for all that I have tried to give them?"

But there was no answer. The crowd stood still, and the face of the Angel of Death grew sad.

With a gesture of more passionate appeal, the old man spoke again.

"It is for myself that I desire it. My strength is at an end; I can think of others no more. They have cast me out, and I also in my turn forsake them. I am no greater nor better than they, and I demand the common fate of a feeble and broken man."

Then the Angel of Death, fingering his sword a little, turned and spoke to him with a voice full of piercing sweetness:

"The fate of a common man is forbidden to you. You gave up, of your free will, all right to desire or to ask anything for yourself alone. And the price of that renunciation was paid to you."

"There is hope yet," the old man answered, smiling strangely, "for I ask it for their sakes also. Because I can no longer help or serve them, except by my death, therefore I desire and entreat to die."

"Do they desire it also?" the Angel asked him. "Is there not any one of them who wishes you to live? If there is but one of them who would beg your life as a boon, I have no right to take it."

The old man looked past the Angel then to the people. They had listened in perplexity and wonder to his voice, hearing no replies.

"You hate me," he cried to them; "you desire my death. Is there one of you—only one—who would keep me alive if he had it in his power?"

There was a murmur among the people, as of much anger, but some protestations, and the multitude moved threateningly forward. But the Angel of Death kept his place, for one of the crowd, a girl, who looked almost a child in her freshness and youth, separated herself from the rest, ran

forward and flung herself at the feet of the old man, clasping his hand and kissing it.

"You fed me when I was hungry; you comforted me when I was wretched; you were a father to me when I was forsaken. They cannot dare to slay you."

A strange light of tenderness struck across the despair of the old man's face and struggled there for a moment. He touched the girl's head caressingly.

"My poor child," he said, "you love me a little? You are grateful?"

"You are kinder than any of them," she answered vehemently; "that is why they want to kill you."

"And you—you desire me to live?"

He asked it in a voice of terrible calm. Her gratitude was precious to him at the moment; but what a price he must pay for it! I looked at the Angel of Death, and wondered to see that he had drawn his sword from its sheath and waited for her answer with a smile upon his face.

A young man had also detached himself from the crowd and followed the girl; he was handsome and strong, but his countenance was angry and impatient.

"You fool!" he said, touching the girl's shoulder to attract her attention before she had time to reply to the old man's question. "You don't know what you are doing. He is no longer of any use to you or to anybody else. He makes mischief and brings trouble. Besides, don't you know that he has gold—quantities of gold—hidden in his place, which he refuses to give up, and which will be divided among the people when he is dead? Our share will enable us to buy a house and to marry."

The girl lifted her head and looked first at her lover, and then at the man whom she had just called her father. A new expression came over her face. The power of her past was forsaking her, and the present was asserting its claim.

"Is it true," she asked slowly, "that you have much gold hidden away?"

"What would it matter if I had?" he answered, speaking in a voice that trembled with consciousness of the strange struggle going on before him. Which did he desire most—a gratitude which kept his life, or a cruel desertion which promised death? There was no time to think of it; he went on blindly groping to the end. "What would it matter if I had?" he repeated. "These people have gold enough. What they want is energy, and self-denial; the power and

will to work. People do not eat gold, nor build their houses nor make their clothes of gold. If I gave them my treasures, they would be richer for a day, and poorer for a year to come."

"But it would have made my fortune," she answered simply. "I was not thinking of the others, you must have known this; yet," she went on very slowly, as if turning the matter over in her mind, "you did not offer me any gold."

"I gave you what you needed: food when you were hungry, fire when you were frozen, sympathy when you were in trouble," he answered, pleading still—against his deeper wisdom—for the kindness which would undo him.

But the girl was truer to her lower nature than he to his.

"With the gold I could have bought food, and clothing, and shelter; and I should not have needed your comfort, for he would have married me at once."

She rose to her feet and looked at him again with something like anger and aversion.

"You pretended to be kind," she said, "and you kept back what would have made me happy. It is nothing to me if they choose to kill you."

Then I looked away from him and saw that the Angel of Death was no longer in the place where he had stood, not to claim, but to protect—for this also is his office—and the crowd with an angry murmur was moving nearer.

They had no weapons with which to slay their victim. In yielding to the long-suppressed instincts of savage fury and revenge they had returned also to ancient forms of cruelty and attack: they were prepared to stone the old man or to tear him in pieces, and they hurried furiously onward without waiting to arm themselves. The girl turned her head from the sight, and spoke to her lover.

"Take me away somewhere. If they are going to kill him I would rather not see it."

And I, too, turned and went, that I might not look upon the end. But the last sight I saw was the face of the old man lifted to the sky, with the light of a great hope shining in his eyes.

When I visited that place again it was very desolate. Nothing of all that had been foretold had failed to come upon it!

THE CASTLE OF MIRAMAR.

A RANGE of dreary limestone hills forms the northern boundary of the Adriatic, beyond the busy port of Trieste—the starting-point of the boat which conveys visitors to Miramar. The Castle rises in solitary grandeur, between sea and sky, on the outlying rocks of a desolate creek in the iron-bound coast; and the mournful character of the surrounding scenery deepens the impression of intense loneliness conveyed by the solemn pile. Crenellated battlements above long rows of arched and mullioned windows surmount a broad stone rampart which fortifies the grey crags laved by the blue waters of the Adriatic. A soft breeze rustles the thick mantle of ivy and Virginia creeper on the bastions, and a shower of scarlet leaves flutters down to the sea. The Austrian flag droops at half-mast from a massive tower, for Miramar was once the home of the ill-fated Maximilian, Emperor of Mexico, and the deserted Castle is left unchanged, as a perpetual memorial of the murdered sovereign. The silence and solitude are unbroken, and the associations of a more distant past sink into comparative insignificance, blotted out by the dark shadow of that terrible tragedy which touches us with the sense of recent loss.

From the stone quay which forms the water-gate of the Castle, marble steps lead to the great terrace above the ramparts. The sculptured balustrades are wreathed with purple clematis, and a flame of geraniums fills the marble vases with vivid colour.

Although Miramar rises on its rocky parapet sheer and straight from the water's edge, the gardens stretch backward in endless variety of leafy avenue and shady bower, green pleasure-land and terraced hill, until they merge into black pine-woods beneath the barren mountains which close the prospect and add to the seclusion of the lonely scene. Aisles of white and crimson roses in full autumnal bloom form vistas of fragrant shade, and the trellised arches reveal a silvery glimpse of falling fountains. The aromatic scent of fir-trees mingles with the breath of a thousand flowers, while the lapsing water and the cooing of doves blend those associations of woodland and sea which add their poetical charms to the haunted spot.

The carved stone porch of the grand entrance to this regal dwelling is veiled

by a luxuriant growth of bronze and crimson creepers, flinging wreaths and tendrils over turret and pinnacle, and brightening the gloom of the dark ivy which frames oriel window and sculptured balcony. Oak doors with emblazoned shields open into a noble hall panelled with blackest oak, and lighted by lancets painted with heraldic bearings of the Austrian Archdukes. Armour, weapons, antlers, and tattered banners line the walls and decorate the grand staircase which leads to a corridor filled with splendid family portraits of the Royal House of Habsburg. The haughty face of Maria Theresa and the mournful beauty of Marie Antoinette, her ill-fated daughter, are conspicuous amidst the long line of Austrian Princesses; and the joyous face of Carl von Löthringen, flushed with victory as he waves the banner of conquering Lorraine, occupies the foremost place in the rank of Royal Archdukes renowned for military prowess and knightly deeds.

Although no reigning family in Europe numbers more tragedies in its annals than this famous House of Habsburg, the interest of the pictures culminates in the portraits of Maximilian and his stricken Consort; and the tragic memories of Austrian sovereignty reach their climax in the mournful records of these two Royal lives, the violent death of the one overthrowing the tottering reason of the other, so long undermined by agonies of suspense and dread. The soldierly figure and dignified bearing of the Emperor are displayed to advantage in his crimson robes of state. The broad forehead denotes intellectual power, and the firm mouth, shaded, but not concealed, by the long fair moustache, expresses the unflinching courage of a gallant race. In the melancholy blue eyes imaginative minds have often recognised the haunted expression sometimes observed in the faces of those doomed to an untimely end, as though the shadow of coming death fell across life even in its prime and flower. Whether this be fact or fancy, no doubt can be entertained as to the cloud of care and sadness which rests on Maximilian's face.

The fair features of Charlotte of Mexico reflect something of this wistful anxiety, and the earnest gaze of the brilliant dark eyes almost contradicts the smile which plays round the sensitive mouth. A more pitiable spectacle than that of the poor distraught Empress was never witnessed

by the European Courts from which she implored help, when her mind at length gave way beneath the terrible strain of anguish and despair.

An oppressive weight of mournful memories broods over desolate Miramar, replete with all that contributes to mental culture and physical enjoyment; but only reminding us the more vividly of that ill-starred life which no human means could solace or save. In the oak-panelled library, the favourite books of the unfortunate Emperor remain just as he left them; his music-score stands on the organ, and traces of daily occupations are seen in an unfinished sketch, a half-written letter on an open desk, and a collection of works on navigation—his favourite study—with notes pencilled on the margins in his own handwriting. The book-shelves, with their copies of English poems, plays, and novels, interspersed with classical authors, and modern works in French and Italian, testify to the wide and liberal culture attained by Maximilian in days of leisure and liberty. These mementoes of his sacrificed life invest the story of the hapless monarch with a tangible reality. In the oriel window of a book-lined recess his favourite arm-chair stands by the open casement, where he loved to sit within sight and sound of the waves which still dash on the rocks a hundred feet below this ideal "Castle by the sea."

We are almost constrained to believe that the little German poem of that name, familiarised to us by Longfellow's translation, was suggested by a visit to Miramar, so exactly does it correspond with the poet's description of the castle which mirrors itself in the waves and soars upward into the crimson light of sunset.

We pass through banqueting-hall and throne-room, gorgeous with emblazoned banners and fading tapestry, the Austrian Eagle surmounting the throne and carved in high relief upon the oaken ceiling. Every saloon is enriched with treasures of art in marble, mosaic, and porcelain. Hirschvögel stoves, adorned with Scriptural scenes in blue and white faience, stand in arched alcoves; and cabinets of exquisite Kronenthal china fill gilded recesses between the long windows which overlook the wide blue sea.

The private apartments of the Empress Charlotte are also left untouched since her last sojourn at Miramar. A group of miniatures, framed in pearls, rests on an ebony work-table; a guitar, tied with a

faded blue ribbon, lies in an open velvet case; and a well-worn book of devotions remains on the back of a prie-dieu chair, beneath an ivory crucifix in a little oratory. The white-and-gold walls, painted with wreaths of flowers, are draped with pale-blue satin; and the delicate colouring of these beautiful chambers contrasts sharply with the sombre grandeur which characterises the greater part of the feudal Castle.

An arcaded cloister leads to the private chapel of the Royal household. Shafts of ruby light from lancet windows pierce the dusky shadows of the dim interior, and emphasize, rather than illuminate, the solemn gloom. The tarnished silver of tabernacle and candlesticks gleams through the mysterious twilight, and a crimson stain falls across the marble altar, before which Maximilian so often knelt in prayer.

How great was the change from the peaceful life of Miramar to the stormy reign in turbulent Mexico, whence the hearts of the Imperial exiles must have turned with hopeless yearning towards their distant home, longing amid the cares of State for the happiness lost for ever amid the strife and bloodshed of the new Western empire!

From the days of the Spanish conquest of Mexico under Cortez, the history of the country has been a ceaseless record of anarchy and revolution. The union of Spaniard, Indian, and Negro—from whence the modern Mexican traces his descent—contains opposing elements which have ever retarded the advance of anything beyond a nominal civilisation. Indian tribes and Creole settlers increased the difficulties of government. Successive revolts reduced Mexico to a condition of social ruin; and the affairs of the country became hopelessly involved.

The President Juarez succeeded in divorcing Church and State, and the Government annexed all ecclesiastical property. Foreign Powers took advantage of the situation to aid the Church party, and sent forces to Mexico in order to secure reparation for losses sustained by their own subjects who had settled in the Republic. English and Spanish claims were adjusted by negotiation, and their forces withdrawn. The French troops alone remained, and, after several defeats, occupied the city of Mexico in 1863. A Regency was formed, and it was decided to establish hereditary government under a Roman Catholic Emperor. The Archduke Maximilian of Austria accepted the

proffered crown, but the peace which followed his arrival in Mexico was of short duration. The troops under Juarez, the deposed President, broke out into open revolt, and their victories were followed by the withdrawal of the French army. Maximilian was thus thrown entirely on his own resources, and contending factions rendered his position absolutely untenable. The clouds which had so long been gathering broke at length in darkest storm, and in May, 1867, the climax came, when the brave descendant of a hundred Kings was captured and shot by his merciless subjects.

As our little boat bears us away from the grand old Castle, lancet and oriel gleam like jewels in the golden light of a radiant afterglow, the solemn towers throw dark shadows over the lustrous blue of the sleeping sea, and the plash of oars alone breaks the silence which lingers perpetually round lonely Miramar. No memorial chapel or stately tomb could so adequately enshrine the unfading memory of the murdered Emperor as this home which he loved so well, wherein every room seems haunted by his presence or pervaded by his taste and culture.

The stern page of contemporary history, which hitherto appeared confused and dim, is henceforth translated into a vivid reality, so deeply is every detail engraved on the mind by a visit to Miramar. Historical characters, when of Royal lineage, often appear to us as a mere gallery of portraits, fenced off by a hedge of State ceremonial from that close intercourse which alone can reveal the common humanity which they share. As we wander through the halls of Maximilian's noble Castle, with its wealth of pathetic memories, and trace the details of his daily life, the personality of the luckless monarch impresses itself upon the mind in clear and decided outlines. We learn to appreciate the dauntless courage which obeyed the call to a life and duty which must have been especially distasteful to one of his gentle, scholarly temperament. Consequences could neither be foreseen nor considered. It is an inspiring thought, that even in the nineteenth century the days of chivalry have not quite passed away, and we can point with pride to the example of Maximilian of Mexico, who so nobly fulfilled the motto of ancient days: "*Fais ce que dois, advienne que pourra.*"

Our little boat drifts through the rocky channel of the lonely creek, where Miramar stands on its solitary outpost at the water's

edge, and the rising moon silvers the sea and throws a mournful radiance over turret and pinnacle, as we turn for a last look at the sacred monument of a lost cause and a sacrificed life.

THE THIRTEENTH BRYDAIN.

By MARGARET MOULE.

Author of "Catherine Maidment's Burden," "Benefit of Clergy," "Mr. Wingrove's Ways," "The Vicar's Aunt," "Dick's Wife," etc.

CHAPTER XXIII.

It was eight o'clock on a lovely May morning at Brydain. The whole aspect of the place presented as complete a contrast as could be imagined to its aspect on that bitter east-windy day, thirteen months before, when Brydain had announced to Mackenzie his intention of going to London. The wind was a soft south-westerly breeze; the sky was of that delicate transparent blue which generally promises a continuance of fine weather; and the only clouds to be seen were two or three little filmy streaks of white, which did but accentuate the blue.

It had been a forward spring; as north-country people estimate forwardness, remarkably so. The trees that grew in the ravine possessed a covering of the tenderest green; and the fronds of bracken which grew at their feet were rapidly uncurling and showing the beautiful green within their rough brown exterior. The gorse was in bloom in large clusters, scattered here and there on the dark hills, and its colour gave even their sombre austerity a look of spring. On the dreary moorland there were traces also of life and growth. These were slight; here and there a patch of fresh-springing grass, or a tuft of the delicate green of young rushes, and one or two rugged, low hawthorn bushes in the glory of their young leaves, constituted all. But the general aspect was the same as that visible everywhere else—an aspect of new life.

Even the ragged pine-trees in the avenue leading to the Great House had their share in the spring; their little fresh shoots showed clearly against the darker parts of the branches. The Great House itself was the only thing in all the landscape that showed no change. It was as cold, as dreary, as gaunt as it had looked thirteen months before, under the lowering clouds driven by the bitter east wind. The May morning sunshine shone all across one side; but it made no difference to it. It

rather seemed as if the very sunlight lost its character and became cold, colourless, and faint by contact with that cold stone and grim outline. It was impossible to connect with the sunlight that shone on the grey stones of the Great House, any idea of the warmth and brightness which were so powerful everywhere around.

Down below, in Brydain village, all was cheerfulness, light, and movement. Children were playing in the street, men were whistling on their way back to their work after breakfast, and their wives were lingering on their doorsteps to watch them and enjoy the sunshine. At the end of the village old Elspeth stood at her open door without her shawl, warming her rheumatic old shoulders in the sun.

Whistling also, James Macgregor the postman came along the street. He came from Carfrae with the letters, and was now proceeding to deliver them in Brydain and two or three other villages which lay across the moor. Every disengaged person in the street turned to watch him, and to take note of those houses which might receive a letter. It was the general practice in Brydain, having seen a letter delivered, to call, later in the day, as leisure might serve, at its destination, to glean any news that its recipient could and would impart. But to-day James Macgregor passed whistling, and nodding here and there, up the whole street without stopping. He went on, smilingly regardless of the disappointed faces that watched him, until he reached, on his way across the moor, the pine avenue leading to the Great House. Here he stopped short. Evidently waiting for him, though he made a pretence of a critical inspection of the sky, accomplished with his head thrown well back and his whole face upturned, was Mackenzie. He had in no way altered. He was wearing at the moment a rougher suit of clothes, otherwise he looked in every respect and detail precisely the same as he had looked thirteen months before. He brought his face down from the sky with what he intended for a start as Macgregor reached him.

"You're early?" he said to the latter in a would-be careless tone.

"I'm in my ordinar'," was the answer. "And I've a letter for you—from Brydain, I'm thinking." With this expression of interest in it, the postman handed Mackenzie the letter in question and went on across the moor. He was, though enquiring, economical of his time, and reflected

that he could learn all he wished to learn about Brydain from Mackenzie at their next meeting.

Mackenzie settled himself in an easy position against the tree, and having searched for some moments in his coat pocket for his glasses, put them on, and opened his letter. He read it with great deliberation to the end; then he gave a curious incoherent exclamation, intended by him as the expression of intense surprise, and proceeded to read it through again. At the end of this second reading, he pulled off his glasses, and thrusting them and the letter into his pocket, turned and went along the rough road to the Great House with the nearest approach to a run of which he was capable. He went round to the back entrance, and flinging open the heavy door which opened straight into the kitchen itself, he entered and sat down on a chair with a gasp.

"Susan Mackenzie!" he called. "Susan! He's coming Thursday! Preserve us all!" he added, with a start, as Mrs. Mackenzie, summoned by his voice, entered hurriedly from the further kitchen where she had been baking; "but this very day is Thursday! And he's coming to-day!"

"Who is coming, Donald Mackenzie?" she asked hastily. "And why are you out of breath? And what's your hat doing on my floor?"

She proceeded to wipe her floury hands on her apron and pick up, with respect solely for the neatness of her domain, Mackenzie's bonnet, which he had thrown off as he sat down.

"Let the bonnet bide, woman," he said, "and listen here. I have a letter from Brydain, and he is coming home to-day for a short while!" Mackenzie struggled to find the pocket in which he had placed the letter.

"The master is coming, Donald Mackenzie!" said his sister-in-law. "Is that what you're saying?"

"No other!" said Mackenzie tersely, still searching for the letter.

"The master! To-day, and both the library and the dining-room out o' windows with spring cleaning! To-day, and no fresh joint in the house!"

"Have done with your havers, woman, and prepare for him! I can take the cart to Carfrae and bring a whole bullock if you will require it! Brydain is coming, do you understand? And he hasna been home for thirteen months——"

"I'm aware of that," said Mrs. Mac-

kenzie shortly. She was half irritated at what she considered her own unpreparedness for an unexpected arrival, and half taken aback by her brother-in-law's excitement. "I'm fully aware of that. The more reason he should find all in good order when he does come. Marjory must go and get on with the rooms at once."

"Marjory!" called her uncle in stentorian tones, before her mother could collect her remembrance of where she had last sent her daughter.

"She's making the beds," said Mrs. Mackenzie, at length. "I'll go and see about it."

But before Mrs. Mackenzie could begin to carry out the comprehensive intention embodied in the last phrase, the door that communicated with the long passage was opened, and Marjory herself came in.

The past thirteen months had altered Marjory Mackenzie very little, as far as physique is concerned. In the strong Scottish air she had grown about an inch taller, and, perhaps, a little better proportioned as to her slight figure. But the impression she gave was still one of intense, almost fragile thinness and lightness. Her colourless hair was twisted in exactly the same fashion round her small head, and not all the fresh moorland air had been able to bring one tinge of colour to her white cheeks.

But the expression of her face—the expression that seemed to centre in those large, light dreamy eyes—had altered; or rather, what had always dwelt there had so developed and intensified as to greatly change that thin face. The far-away, curiously ethereal look had spread from her eyes over her whole face. Every line of it was influenced by it, from the great white brow to the pointed chin and thin lips. Not only her eyes, but her whole face seemed to be always fixed on something out of sight, and to have imprinted on it a reflex from that something.

She looked curiously out of keeping with the surroundings of the kitchen, as she stood in the doorway, framed by them, with the darkness of the passage for a background. She was wearing a light cotton working frock, and a white apron; and the effect of her dress, added to her own perfect colourlessness, was to heighten indescribably the air of ethereal unreality about her. She was almost weirdly suggestive of some one walking in sleep; whose eyes are still gazing on their dreams.

"You called me, mother," she said.

Her voice was low, and her utterance accorded with her appearance. It was slow, and the unmusical tone seemed to come from far away.

"I called you, lass," interpolated Mackenzie. "I believe your mother had the intention also, though. Marjory, you'll need to stir briskly! Brydain intends to be here to-day!"

"Brydain?" began the girl, dreamily. "Is Mr. Brydain coming back from London?" she added, with a sudden quickening of her voice. "Is that what you mean, uncle?"

"That is precisely what your uncle does mean," said Mrs. Mackenzie quickly. "And what I mean is, that you must leave those upper rooms and get to work at once on the library and the dining-room. The scrubbing's done, thank goodness, but there's all that oak polishing, let alone the windows to be cleaned. You'd better get your cloths and go on and begin at once in the library, while I get the dinner out of hand."

Mrs. Mackenzie paused for breath, and consideration; and the girl, who had stood quite still all this time in the doorway, moved with a quick, sudden turn and went into the other kitchen, apparently in search of the dusters in question.

"You'll make it fair and clean for Brydain to see, lass?" Mackenzie called after her in a tone of sharp command, which was, however, not unmixed with a certain vein of pleading.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE room which was known in the Great House of Brydain as "the library" was on the ground floor, and constituted the only other sitting-room besides the long dining-room. It was a small square room, opening out of one corner of the hall. It had been seldom used by Keith Brydain and his father except as a smoking-room occasionally, and a place in which to store anything for which it was inconvenient to find an immediate abiding-place—such as guns in temporary disuse, or fishing-rods which needed the attention which could not be afforded them until a rainy day should provide time. Everything of this description had been carefully removed by Mackenzie when Keith Brydain left, and stored in its rightful home. But still the room retained a curiously mixed character. Along one side of it were bookcases, with

curious old-fashioned wire fronts in the place of glass, containing an assortment of books that varied from large, leather-bound scientific works placed there by a Brydain of studious inclinations a hundred years before, to a shelf of novels, collected on different occasions by Keith. The intervening gradations were composed of indiscriminate works, among which both Shakespeare and a treatise on the rearing of cattle found a place. In one corner was an old cabinet piano, the cracked and quavering notes of which were the only accompaniment to which Keith had been used to sing, and also two or three chairs covered in faded needlework, a relic of the days when the room had been used as a drawing-room for David Brydain's young wife. Over the mantelpiece were various photographs of Keith, which his father had collected and hung there with his own hands.

Very few of these details were visible, however, as Marjory Mackenzie entered the room ten minutes after she had received her uncle's news and her mother's orders. The larger pieces of furniture were, one and all, covered in white dust-sheets; and the smaller were placed in indiscriminate confusion in the middle of the floor. Marjory threw down the cloths she carried, and looked around her vaguely. Her light cotton sleeves were rolled up high above her elbows, in a practical fashion; and this trifling detail, by accentuating her occupation, seemed to increase the incongruity between it and her appearance. After a moment's inspection, she crossed the room to the fireplace, and unfastening the dust-sheet which was covering the photographs, let it fall on the floor, and rested her elbows on the mantel-shelf, while her large brown eyes fixed themselves on a photograph. It was the last that had been taken of Keith Brydain during his father's lifetime. It was a large one, and very good. He was leaning against one of the stone door-posts of the Great House; and the photograph had caught at once his most handsome and his most natural expression.

Marjory looked at it with eyes so intent, that it might almost have seemed as if she expected some response from the pictured face. But no expectation was written on her face. There was nothing in those great eyes but intent concentration. She did not move or change her position in the least. Through the open windows of the library came the voices of children

on the moor, the bleat of the lambs, and the cry of a cuckoo. And the contrast between the world represented by these simple sounds of life outside, and the curious little scene being enacted in the lonely library within, was startling in its force. The pale girl, immovable and concentrated, hardly looked as if she were alive at all, far less as if she ever had, or ever could have a share in the cheery, stirring life of the world without.

At length she moved slightly, and as she moved, she spoke.

"To die," she said, with a long-drawn intonation. "He doesn't look like—death," she said, with a shudder, and a pause before the last word. "And he's coming, coming himself to-day."

She spoke almost under her breath as if she were afraid of the sound of her own voice, and for a moment she took her eyes from the photograph and glanced round the room fearfully. But this was only for a moment; the next, her large eyes were again centred on the deep-set eyes in the photograph.

During the thirteen months that had gone by since she first came to the Great House, Marjory Mackenzie's thoughts had been fixed on one subject; her mental vision had been concentrated on one figure. The first was the doom of the Brydains; the last, Keith Brydain himself.

Marjory possessed an organisation which was both curious and complex. Her father had had a quick, inventive brain and an unusual share of the vein of romanticism often latent in the Scottish character. All that could be defined as hereditary in the child came plainly from him, and none of her character bore the slightest affinity to that of her capable, matter-of-fact mother. Marjory had been very delicate indeed as a baby, and the fragility lasted on into her childhood. She had one childish illness after another, and was undersized, ailing, and fretful, always. But apparently the weak physical nature that made no effort to gather force and assert itself, left all the more force in her personality to be used in mental development.

This development showed itself chiefly in the rapid growth of an abnormally vivid imagination, an imagination which had in the child's life no outlet whatever.

Mrs. Mackenzie had no comprehension of, or sympathy for what she called "the child's whims and fancies," and her father was too fully occupied with his trade as a cabinet-maker, to give much heed to

his child. She was too delicate and shrinking to make companions of other children, and she was therefore thrown back upon herself for everything. Under this loneliness, her imagination developed more rapidly than ever. The child would sit alone for hours, gazing into the fire in winter, or up into the clouds in summer, living an intense, lonely life, in a world the inhabitants, surroundings, and motives of which were all the creation of her own brain. Then came a pause, in which the repressed physical nature seemed to make an effort; and the child shot up into a tall, thin girl. But the outward change in her made no corresponding inward change. Her imaginativeness gained ground more and more. To her mother, Marjory became inexplicable. One day she would be both intelligent and capable; on another she would be almost childishly useless and incomprehending; and on the next, she would be out of reach, and far away in a world that was practically inaccessible, apparently. As the months went by she became more and more dreamy and visionary, and the interludes of capability grew fewer and fewer.

Mrs. Mackenzie, when she found that Marjory did not "grow out" of her dreaminess, and was only temporarily roused from it even by the shock of her father's death, which occurred through an accident, gave up all plans for the girl's future as hopeless. She resolved in despair, that Marjory would be "never no good at anything." And she therefore decided, on the death of her husband, to obtain a caretaker's situation for herself, and to keep Marjory with her. And just then occurred the train of circumstances that brought the two to Brydain.

With the first evening of her arrival there, and the account given in the fire-lit kitchen to her and her mother, by Mackenzie, of the doom of the Brydains, Marjory's mind received an impress that was to be life-long. It was as if the object that her imagination had unconsciously sought all her life had suddenly been presented to it; and there and then her mind fastened on the weird story with a hold that was never to weaken. Everything in the girl's nature that was sympathetic rose and assimilated the story to itself; all her imaginativeness rose in a powerful wave, and washed away every other train of thought to leave room for the Brydain doom. Then and there the thought of that weird, unearthly, ap-

parently unconquerable fate entered her mind and dwelt there alone.

The girl was wholly fascinated and overwhelmed by it; and the weird fascination was driven slowly home, as it were, by the almost simultaneous sight of Brydain himself.

Ever since that moment Keith Brydain's face had been before Marjory's eyes, and he and his destiny had become absolutely interwoven with her life. She admired him; she pitied him; and finally, though she did not know it, and her weak, imaginative mind could never have so defined the fact to herself, she had fallen in love with him. That is to say, she had fallen in love with the fascinating position in which he stood; with him, not as a man, but as the centre of it—the pivot on which her daily and hourly imaginings turned.

She had collected, during these months, every scrap of information that could be gleaned about him and his story. First, from her uncle, who had shown her the chart, and explained to her, with a sort of pride in it, every terrible instance of the fulfilment of the doom; then, from old Elspeth and various people in Brydain village. These were at first inclined to resent curiosity in an "English-born lass" on a subject which was to them as their own affair; but, finally, finding her earnestly eager for information, they gave her every detail she could ask. Many a scolding from her mother for "gossiping" fell to Marjory's lot after a much-delayed return from an errand in Brydain.

Every detail in the Great House itself that was in the remotest way connected with any one concerned in the doom, the silver which was engraved with the names of the dead men, pictures of them, scraps of handwriting in old books, all were known to and dwelt on by Marjory. And the crowning point of all these details had been hitherto Keith's photograph. She had looked at it every day, with eyes of fascination and longing; and now this morning she was looking at it with the indescribable emotion awakened in her by the news that he himself would be here that very day.

The sunlight crept into the library window; it shone coldly, but it broadened rapidly on the floor, and an experienced eye would have known that the broad riband of light meant eleven o'clock, but Marjory had neither moved nor glanced at

it, when steps sounded outside the library door.

Marjory faced round with a start, as the door opened quickly, and her mother came in.

"You don't mean to tell me you've never begun?" she exclaimed. "Eleven o'clock, and you've not touched a thing, and the master coming to-night! You've been reading them books again! Oh, who would have a girl so little use as you are, Marjory?"

With many more words to the same effect, Mrs. Mackenzie took up the cloths and began to make a rapid change in the dismantled room. Marjory meanwhile, without a word in answer, assisted her, slowly and mechanically.

All through the remaining hours of that day she helped her mother in the preparations for Brydain's arrival with a curious, indefinable elation. She moved as if she were in a dream. She arranged furniture, prepared supper, lighted fires, all in the same dream, and in the dream moved incessantly the figure of Brydain.

It was not until late in the dusk of the May evening that Mackenzie's uncontrollable excitement at length was able to find some relief in harnessing the horse to the dog-cart with his own hands, and setting off to Carfrae station, fully an hour too soon for the train.

It was nearly two hours later when the crunching of the wheels on the rough stones was heard by Mrs. Mackenzie and Marjory. The dog-cart stopped at the stone doorway, and Mrs. Mackenzie came forward, curtsying, into the hall. Brydain jumped down lightly and ran up the doorsteps.

"How do you do, Mrs. Mackenzie?" he said cheerily. "What a beautiful fire you've got in the dining-room! It's good to be at home!"

Mrs. Mackenzie moved a little to let him pass into the dining-room.

But he did not move; he started, and almost dropped the Gladstone bag he was carrying. Behind her mother, in a clean light frock, stood Marjory Mackenzie. The firelight, shining out of the open dining-room door, caught her great eyes, and lit them alone, while the rest of her figure was a dim, luminous outline in the dusky hall. "I couldn't think who it was!" he said, recovering himself and laughing. "I hope you are well, Marjory!"

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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By ESMÈ STUART.

Author of "A Faire Damzell," "Joan Vellacot," "Kestell of Greystone," etc., etc.

CHAPTER LXI. CONQUERED.

MAJOR BOND was spending the evening with his fiancée, who, dressed in a very becoming evening costume, sat in a low chair near the drawing-room fire enjoying the worship expected and received by a newly engaged young lady. She looked very lovely, though a man very much in love would have considered her a little unsympathetic. Her smile came and went with too great regularity, her animation was forced, and her whole demeanour was too much studied to have deceived a true lover. Major Bond, however, did not altogether answer to that title. He had intended wooing and winning a pretty wife, the prettier the better. It is very easy to fall in love with beauty, especially if beauty is accompanied with a handsome dower, and the Major believed in the dower, and could assure himself by frequent glances that the beauty was not a thing of the imagination. Had the dower been wanting, however, the beauty would not have affected him in the same way.

Minnie, on the other hand, was dissatisfied because she did not feel happier; Major Bond's smart speeches had a habit of reappearing like recurring decimals, and she was too quick-witted to wish to repeat her answers. She was so well assured of her own beauty that even the Major's compliments palled and lost their early charm; besides, from sundry very

slight remarks he had allowed himself to make, Minnie gathered that money was an object. She had thought, previous to her engagement, that she was marrying a man who was quite above thinking of sordid wealth, and the discovery was a little amazing, and brought the unwelcome thought with it that Harry Laurence's rent-roll was a well assured certainty, even if the assurance was in the future. Given no certainty on the Major's present prospects, Minnie found it harder to make plans about the future.

"But," repeated Minnie to herself at the same moment as she was smiling at her lover, "there is society. Harry's society would have to be sorted and selected; the society which the future Mrs. Bond will enter will be lively and select."

The Major at last took up the paper and yawned slightly behind the crumpling screen. Mrs. Gordon had insisted on keeping him at the Warren on account of the weather, and he had—at the time—joyfully assented. Now he felt bored, for all had been accomplished—the dinner the love-making, really somewhat ardent—whilst the widow and Frances had pretended to be busy in the library. Then tea had been brought in, and the assembling of the ladies had diverted the pretty nothings, and now again, when a somewhat lively scene in which he might have been partaking at Aldershot would paint itself very clearly on his mental vision, he found himself once more alone with the beautiful but impassive Minnie. He was decidedly sleepy, and wished that his future mother-in-law had remained in the drawing-room.

This time indeed it was a real matter which had called her and Frances away. The butler had whispered that the cook

wished to see her, and she and Frances had hurried out to find that a kitchen beam was smouldering.

Mrs. Gordon said that the lovers were not to be disturbed, but she and Frances stayed to see the necessary precautions taken. In an emergency the widow never lost her head.

"By Jove! what a night it is," said the Major, putting down the paper. "You hear the wind in all its fury up here. It's a lonely house; when the fairest has left it it will be truly desolate."

"I suppose Austin will come and live here. He must marry. I am glad I have not to see his wooing. Austin is sure to marry a middle-aged frump."

"You don't give your brother credit for much artistic perception, and yet he has had a long opportunity to study the beautiful."

"No; Austin is so quixotic; he will marry a woman because he thinks she is too ugly to find a husband."

What Major Bond would have answered to this can never be known, for at this moment there was a sound of carriage wheels, and even Minnie looked surprised.

"Who can be coming at this time of night?"

"And on such a night?"

Minnie rose and opened the door, for her curiosity was excited. She passed through the second drawing-room and looked into the hall, and she saw her mother and Frances come forward to greet Austin himself. Minnie was disappointed and hurried back to the drawing-room, expecting the others to follow; but in this she was disappointed, for only Frances came.

"Where is Austin? Whatever has brought him here so unexpectedly?"

"He wanted to see mother in a great hurry on some business matter. I suppose he has chosen a career at last."

Then Frances began the story of the smouldering beam, which led to other histories of other beams, and the ball of conversation became less difficult to keep rolling.

Mrs. Gordon's surprise at the sight of her son was by no means feigned, but she felt a little disturbed by his anxious looks. Her maternal sympathy was at once called into play by his appearance.

"My poor dear boy. Why, you are frozen! I wonder you found a flyman to drive you here. I should have hesitated to send the dog-cart even. Major Bond

is in the drawing-room. They are so happy, really one could not wish for anything better. Will you join them, or do you want something to eat?"

"No, mother. Is there a fire in the library? I have something to say, some business, and I want to see you alone."

"Of course; come in the library. There is a nice fire there. We have had such an excitement this evening."

Austin had divested himself of his great coat and followed his mother without hearing a word she said. He was trying to think how best to unfold what he had to say.

Mrs. Gordon sat down in a large arm-chair and rested her feet on the fender. She looked the picture of a pattern mother. She was reserving her look of displeasure till the right moment. She was certain that Austin had something to tell her about Grace. How bitterly Mrs. Gordon now repented of having sent those girls to Germany. Why had she not chosen Italy, France, or any other country?

"Mother, I have come to tell you that we are——"

Mrs. Gordon rose impatiently. Austin's tone already irritated her and she interrupted him.

"Pray, Austin, don't enter into one of your tiresome arguments. If it is business let it be business. I don't think you have ever found me remiss on that score."

Austin had been preparing himself to put the case as gently as possible; now he flung away disguise. Evidently his mother did not feel any remorse, whilst he had been enduring mental agonies for her sake. He lost all patience.

"Well, then, I can be as brief as the business I have come about. This house, this money is not ours; we ought not to be here in possession, and we must leave it as soon as possible."

Austin expected surprise and exclamation, which would be feigned, of course; but he was wrong. Mrs. Gordon thought, "He cannot know. There is yet time."

"You have wished this to be true before now; but, happily for your sisters, Mr. Blackston proved you wrong."

"Excuse me, mother, from what came into his possession he proved me wrong."

"He could not do more nor less."

"But something else has turned up. James Gordon was legally married, and his children are his rightful heirs."

"Indeed! and what proof have you? The red diary gave none."

Austin wished to say straight out :

"You destroyed the proof it contained," but the words died on his lips. She had known—yes, she must have known all along that this inheritance was not theirs. The stinging knowledge of this fact made him a coward. He had saved his mother's reputation before the world ; but how could he act a lie before the one being who knew the truth ?

Mrs. Gordon, on her side, was reviewing all the past actions. She had found the secret drawer. She had seen the diary and papers ; but she had carefully not looked at them till after Bee's discovery. Thus far she was or could prove herself blameless.

On the other hand, the few leaves from the diary had been destroyed so lately, the motive of the act had been merely to put off the evil day so that it had not altogether assumed its right magnitude in her eyes, for the widow was one of those who build up a wall of well-digested arguments round all their actions, a wall meant to look impregnable to the outside world. Now the wall round that one act of direct wrong was not yet finished. The mother and son were therefore standing on two different platforms of thought and of motives.

Austin sat down again, feeling that he should never be able to tell her that he knew. Was it necessary ? If his trust and respect were gone—how miserably gone !—why should he let her know it ? But the fear was if by some clever reasoning she should again deprive the innocent of their right. If his own hopes were dead, for he hardly could now entertain the idea of marrying Grace, the heiress, he hardly could imagine himself bringing the deeply wronged girl to his mother who had wronged her, and bidding her love her as her daughter. No, the thing seemed too impossible and degrading to his sense of honour.

There was but one thing to do—to do what was right ; to leave the Warren and the miserable inheritance which had brought so much shame and misery with it, and to begin life in earnest, that is, to keep his mother instead of letting her keep him. Heaven helping him, the time of hesitation was over.

"Look here, mother, we need not argue out the impossible now. I have found the marriage certificate of James Gordon ; and I have taken a copy of it to Mr. Blackston."

Mrs. Gordon smiled, but it was a smile which made Austin's heart ache.

"Then, of course, Austin, it will be examined and well looked into. If, indeed, it is not a mere sham. I should not be surprised, indeed, if that poor wife, that weak, hysterical creature, who much wished to be a legal wife, had not bribed some poor clerk to have it inserted."

The very possibility of this made Austin feel as if he were taken in a snare from which he could not disentangle himself.

He must speak more plainly.

"I think even a lawyer will agree that when a woman writes down the name of the church where she is married, and that the register of that church agrees with her own account, then there is little chance of a mistake."

Mrs. Gordon did not move a muscle ; her face was in the shadow, for she had sat down again. The only evidence of her extreme agitation at hearing Austin's plain statement was the softest tapping of her foot on the thick rug.

"My dear Austin, just the very proof of the poor thing's conspiracy, if I may use such a grand word. James Gordon always said that she was not his wife, and died without making a sign. The lawyers had examined everything carefully, and really we have nothing to blame ourselves about. Now leave Mr. Blackston to enquire into all this, and come and see our dear Major."

Both rose as if with one consent. Mrs. Gordon made a few steps towards the door, whilst Austin placed himself in front of her.

"No I will see no one to-night, unless I tell them about this. It is true ; you know it is true, mother. Every hour we stay here under false pretences we are wronging the innocent."

"Austin, you strangely forget yourself. You forget that you are speaking to your mother."

Austin made a sign of negation, but did not move to let his mother pass.

"No, no, I do not forget it. Mother, mother, spare me ! I have hidden the truth from the world because—because you are my mother."

"The truth ?"

"Yes, the truth which you knew and hid."

"Indeed ! When ?"

"When you first came here."

"How ridiculous you are, Austin. How could I hide what I did not know ? The

first time I saw the writing in the diary was when Bee brought it to me."

Austin did not notice the words of the reply. He was staggered. Had he accused his mother wrongly? He had believed her long guilty. Was the moving of the bureau mere chance? But the leaves that were cut out; that, at all events, was true.

"Then when Bee brought it, it contained pages which are not in it now."

"Did it? Then it must have been a mere accident. The little thing was very loose, and several leaves were almost tumbling out. If by any chance some fell out, they have been lost; but what makes you think so?"

"I had read the name of the church on the evening Bee showed it to me. I read it hastily, and hardly noticed the name. Then when I looked to verify it, that page was gone. I racked my brain to remember, and at last it came back to me. I went there, and I found the name and date."

"Thank goodness, I know it all now," thought Mrs. Gordon, remaining exactly as she was, neither looking glad nor sorry. Aloud she answered:

"I never noticed the name of the church, so I fear either that the leaves dropped out in my possession or when Bee still had it. In all the confusion of her packing they must have been burnt. I am very glad, Austin, you have told me all. I—I verily believe, dear boy"—she came a step nearer to him, and placed her hand on his arm—"I do really, that you thought I had done this on purpose. Quixotic to the end! As if I should have dared to tamper with anything legal; only very, very ignorant people do such things. Even from no other motive, your mother is too much a woman of the world to have been so foolish."

She took his arm and led him back to the chair.

"Let us discuss this quietly. You say that no one knows about the lost leaves. That is right. It would sound too foolish; and you see how anxious I am—I have always been—to have everything sifted by the lawyers. One cannot be too particular in these matters. Shall we, for the sake of argument, say that this thing is so, and that we must give up the Warren?"

It is a strange fact that a mind can be turned from its course by the stronger power of another will and that in spite of previous firm resolution. Austin had listened to his mother's speech without

uttering an exclamation; he knew as well as if she had written it down that she had done this thing; he knew that she wished him to believe otherwise, and gradually he was turned from his purpose. He was her son; he could not accuse her again; he must accept her explanation. His man's brain was too clear-sighted when once exercised in the right direction to be taken in, but his righteous anger had undergone a change; he could not now let her know in plain words that he knew she was guilty. She wanted him to believe a lie, and he must pretend to believe it—he who was the soul of honour, and cared for truth with almost an exaggerated belief in its efficacy as a conduct of life.

He sat down beaten and disheartened; he believed that his mother would always get the better of him, and that she would circumvent him in his best efforts. The prospect was terribly gloomy, and the whole light of life went out, for now and always at the end of his meditation came the one idea of Grace, and one look at his mother seemed entirely to blot out that name. Had he been alone, he would have given way to despair, but even this could not be shown now; he must think, he must try to act for the best, and he must try and make his mother go where truth pointed.

"Yes, mother; we must give up the Warren."

"Then I shall see about those poor girls. Their father's sin has brought worse than trouble upon them and upon us."

"Yes. They have suffered enough."

Mrs. Gordon laughed ironically.

"Their suffering is hardly to be put into the scale when compared with mine. They are young. You, Austin, with your high-flown whims, hardly realise what I shall suffer. I shall have to go to a very small lodging. I have even spent some of my capital in order to get more ready money for Bee's marriage, and there was the getting in here. I am only now beginning to feel the good of—of the income."

There was a ring of such intense depression and such hopelessness that Austin's tender heart was more than touched. She was his mother, and she had slaved for her children for so many years, and now he had altered it all. He had brought sorrow on her grey hairs.

"Mother, don't speak like that. All this is not ours; it would hang like a load round our necks if the innocent were not righted. Give it all up, and I will work

for you. I have heard of a school where they want a partner. It is a good school, and if we sink some of your capital in it, it will enable us to live. We will take a small house near the school for you. Fancy, I can come and see you every day, and—mother, look at the bright side of things."

He came near to her and knelt down beside her; he had—figuratively—meant to curse her, and now he was showing her how he could bless her.

"It is very easy for you young people to begin life again," she said, and all the brightness of her voice seemed lost.

"Mother."

"Yes." She turned her head away from him.

"You will live to be glad, mother."

Austin's tenderness had been like balm to Mrs. Gordon's tired spirit; his last remark was like vinegar. The defeated woman in her rose up and rebelled.

"Glad! Of course not. Joy is quite out of the question, so don't talk nonsense. I have tried to do the best I could for my children, and they have turned against me. A mother can never forget that. I will see Mr. Blackston to-morrow. Now, that will do, Austin. It is very late. I have forgotten Major Bond." She rose up and, slightly waving away Austin, she remarked: "I doubt very much whether he will marry a penniless Miss Gordon."

THE POSSESSION OF WEALTH.

THERE appeared, the other day, in an American journal, a report of the usual "interview" with the usual American "millionaire." It does not matter which journal it was in, nor who was the millionaire. This particular millionaire delivered himself—or is reported to have delivered himself—in the usual way, and he laid stress, as, under similar circumstances, it has become the fashion to lay stress, on the fact that he got nothing out of his wealth. All that he got was the pleasure of carrying the Old Man of the Sea for ever on his shoulders. They were a perpetual weight upon his mind, his millions or his billions, whichever it might be; for even that enterprising, and intelligent, and "smart" American interviewer did not succeed in getting him to state the exact figures down to, say, a recurring point in decimals. His tastes—

this millionaire's—were simple; you will note that, in the interviews, they always are. With the post, he wanted "little here below." So far as his own habits were concerned, he could live on a dime a day, or thereabouts, and leave a margin, and enjoy himself—with no room for further enjoyment—on the balance. And if you have been following these little episodes of contemporary social life, as they have been reported on the other side, you will have noticed that all the millionaires, of late, have been declaring that they get nothing out of their wealth. They do not say who has got anything out of it; but they do say plainly that they haven't.

Well, if one of these gentlemen, who has acquired his wealth out of the sweat of other men's brows, feeling that he can get nothing out of it now that he has got it, would like to hand it over to me, I will undertake to get something out of it, or, at least, I will undertake to have a good hard and a good long try.

One hardly likes to accuse gentlemen of such stainless honour of being perverters of the truth. Still one wonders; for of all the lies which are told in this age of lies, there is one which is head and shoulders higher than all the rest. It is the lie which tells us that wealth is not a thing to be desired. Notice that those who shout it the loudest are not seldom in the front rank of those who demonstrate its falsehood by their practice. There is a tale told somewhere of a man who lighted on a gold-mine "unbeknown" to his neighbours; and he went about and informed them, gratuitously, that that particular plot of land was the worst plot of land in all those parts, and they let him have it for a song; and he dug gold out of it in ship-loads; and he smiled; and they smiled too, no doubt. When a man, I care not if he be priest or layman, tells me that wealth is not the thing to be desired above all the things of this world, I wonder if the gold-mine which he has his eye on is in my back-yard or in my trouser-pockets.

We are told, in the books and out of them, of the things which "wealth cannot buy;" that is the phrase, you will generally find. There is quite a long list of these things, as you will see, if you care to jot them down upon a piece of paper. Certainly wealth is not omnipotent; not quite, as yet. The "stars in their courses" sometimes prevail even against

the 'big battalions.' It is a fact, and every man who is born has to die. Let us grant it. Then let us glance at some of the things which we are told wealth cannot buy.

We have all seen, in print, the statement—I only saw it again in a pretty well-known publication last week—that wealth cannot buy us fame, honour, distinction, so-called "immortality." It is quite a copy-book axiom that men have to earn these things, to deserve them. That is true enough, in a sense. A man has to earn and deserve them in the sense in which he has to earn and deserve a 'bus-drive from Charing Cross to Liverpool Street, by paying a penny. The conductor does not ask him how he earned and deserved the penny—not he. It has always seemed to me that if there is one thing beyond all others which wealth can purchase, it is "the bubble reputation."

Consider the variety of ways in which that particular article can be purchased.

There has been some outcry lately because of the indisputable fact that titles are so seldom bestowed upon men of letters.

We have been informed that a title is a country's crown of honour, its badge of merit, not only in theory but in practice; that it is the mark of distinction which an approving sovereign and an admiring people place upon the individual who has well done—no matter what. Let us not dispute it, ill-doers that we are, being paupers, but let us notice that no man ever earned a title who was not rich enough. The higher the title, the greater the wealth. When it becomes a question of bestowing a title—in the case of a really poor man it never does become a question; we are much too sensible—then the bigger the man's fortune, the bigger the title he receives. A thousand pound a year man might be made a knight, but it is only the billionaires who deserve to be dukes. It is notorious that some men become so rich, that a grateful nation feels compelled, because of their wealth, to make them peers.

A peer, with a large, healthy, and increasing family, would appear to have as much chance of "immortalising" his name as any average man. But there are other roads to "immortality" open to wealth besides the peerage. A rich man can found hospitals, schools, orphanages, homes, asylums, and that sort of thing. He can

build churches or cathedrals, literary institutes, or even picture galleries; or he can "go in" for "model dwellings" or for "people's parks." There are thousands of things which a rich man can build and stick his name upon—a name which, in the finite sense, will never be forgotten either. Look at the "foundations" which rich men did found—ah, centuries ago. We know who founded them to this hour, especially if we enquire. The man who paints the pictures will live no longer than the man who buys them all and builds a gallery of many coloured marbles and of beautiful design in which to hang them.

What grander immortality could there be than that which lies within the reach of the man of fabulous wealth who resolves to devote it all to the furtherance of some great object? The great object need not necessarily be a good object—quite the other way. We differ so much in our opinions of what is good. But if some half-dozen of the richest men now living were deliberately to resolve to devote their all to raising for themselves shrines of immortality, what temples they might raise.

The pyramids would not be in it, and they are immortal. Their builder made a huge mistake, one which our rich men never could be guilty of. He forgot to stamp his name on every stone. Our rich men, and surely, before and beyond all others, the American "giants of finance," would be exceedingly careful to see that their names were cut in indelible letters on every square inch of every stone which the builder laid. Moreover, their statues would crown the summit, and portrait models of themselves and their relations would be placed wherever they could find a spot just handy.

This is not accounted to them as a crime. It is merely stated as a fact.

There are other roads to immortality which the man who is the possessor of great wealth can, if he chooses, make royal roads. He must be an unusually dull-witted person if he cannot make his mark in contemporary politics. The rôle of patron of art, literature, and science is not by any means played out. If a millionaire wrote a book, it would at least run into many editions. It is not improbable that in future ages it would continue to be regarded with reverence, at any rate by bibliomaniacs. If he painted a picture, it would certainly make a better bid for

public favour than, say, the canvases of the persevering Smudge, whose residence is a top attic in Newman Street. If he wrote a play or composed an opera, either work would be given to the world in the best possible style and without the least delay. Moreover, it is even betting that, good, bad, or indifferent, it would pay for production.

The longer you consider the clearer you will perceive that the very rich man, the millionaire, has, to put it mildly, an infinitely better chance of procuring fame, distinction, honour, "immortality," than either I who write or you who read. I am supposing that you are not one of those unhappy beings—vide the "inter-views." I know that I am not.

Then the rich man has another advantage—animmeasurable advantage, one of which he himself appears at times to have but a faint appreciation—he can be honest, if he chooses! Dishonesty, with him, is a question of taste, not of absolute necessity. Becky Sharpe was not satirical, she was simply truthful when she said that any one could be honest with five thousand a year. When I hear, as I heard not long ago, of a tramp being sent to prison by a bench of wealthy country gentlemen because he slept under a hayrick and dared to cover himself with the hay, on a winter's night when the thermometer was several degrees below freezing point, I wish that the prayers of the unrighteous might prevail, because then I would pray that those wealthy country gentlemen might be able to realise that tramp's position. I have before me a report of some comments which the Recorder of Liverpool made upon the case of a man—the man was then before him—who had been sentenced, at various times, to terms of penal servitude amounting, in the aggregate, to forty-one years. This man, let it be well understood, was a thief, a pestilent thief, what the police call an "habitual" thief. The thefts of which he had been found guilty, and for which he had been sentenced to forty-one years' penal servitude, all being added together, were less than the value of a five-pound note. That is to say, for less than five pounds he had been doomed to a life's imprisonment. I protest that, as I read it I hardly knew whether to laugh or cry.

What will the rich man—the millionaire who gets nothing out of his wealth—say to such a case as this? Such cases are not infrequent. Will he say that it

served the fellow right? That he should have robbed upon a bigger scale? Unfortunately, that is what the people who in one place call themselves Anarchists, in another, Socialists, in another Communists, in still another Nihilists—that is the principle they are advocating, robbery upon a bigger scale!

Then there are other forms of honesty which, to the rich man, come as matters of course. He can afford to have his own opinions, and he has them. There are Liberals who write for Tory papers, and Tories who scribble for Liberal papers, or has one only dreamt such things? They write the thing which they believe is not, because they are afraid—with cause—that if they did not write it they might starve. There are men—honest gentlemen—who would, and do, write anything, so that they may keep themselves, and their wives, and their children alive. There are preachers who preach what they deem heresy, lest the pew-rents should decline. There are artists who, deliberately and of malice prepense, lower their art to keep the brokers from the house; and there are doctors who make of the gifts of healing a laughing-stock and a derision in pursuit of a practice. The millionaire should have no difficulty in being able to feel that he is not as these men are.

Then there are the social dishonesties—the millionaire need know nothing of them. He need know nothing of the miserable frauds which are inevitable in the struggle to keep up what are called "appearances." He can sit apart and despise the sorry, dirt-stained fools, and he need never attempt to realise that in the poor ambition which made them struggle there might possibly have been something noble. He need never know what it means to try to live at the rate of five hundred a year when you have only four. The life of a Wilkins Micawber is a sealed book to him. Above all, the punishment, the ignominy, and the shame which overtakes the man, and, still more, the woman, who endeavours to enjoy the sweets of life, when he or she can only afford to enjoy its bitters—he need know nothing of that.

There are, the good books tell us—I am not sure that political economists do not tell us, too—pre-eminently three things which money cannot buy. When I was a child I believed it. How the world has lied, and how it still is lying to the children! Now that I am a man I know it is not true. They tell us that not all the

gold that ever came out of all the gold-mines will ever buy love, health, and happiness. Let us see if this is so. Let us see, that is, if money will not buy us love, health, and happiness. And, first of all, as to love.

What kind of love are we to speak of? Is it the love of a parent for a child, or of a child for a parent? The love of a brother for a brother, or of a sister for a sister? Of a friend for a friend? Or of married folk for each other?

Consider one point. Think of the many men who have gone to their graves bachelors because they could not afford to marry; or who have waited years and years till their manhood has passed its prime and the joy has gone out of their lives, and even then scarcely dared to venture.

Marriage has become a somewhat expensive luxury. Men feel, with Bacon, that he who takes unto himself a wife "gives hostages to fortune." Rightly or wrongly they think it better to first get the means, feeling that when they have got the means there will be no difficulty about the wife. This is out of the books, you understand.

On the other hand, has not the rich man only himself to blame if he fails to win a woman's love, and to wear it next his heart, at once, without any waiting, and to keep it to the end? Drop down, having five, ten, fifteen thousand a year—not to speak of the millionaires—where you will, in some country hamlet, or in some great town, meet Wordsworth's "perfect woman, nobly planned"; behave to her with fitting generosity, open to her your money-bags as well as your heart, and what are the odds that she is not your wife well within six months? Yes, and it will be your own fault if she is not a true and loving wife to you until the Reaper moves his scythe, and one of you is taken and the other is left.

I will not dwell upon the obviously mercenary marriages, the marriage of seventy with seventeen, of the shattered constitution with the fresh young life, of the battered *roué* with the maiden who is still standing where the two streams meet. It is enough to note that the truest love matches—so-called—are those in which, on one side or the other, there is money. This, also, is not in the books, but it is in real life.

The absence of money presses harder on the woman than the man. Our factories, our workshops, all trades and all profes-

sions, are becoming overcrowded with young girls and full-grown women. Why? One great reason is because they are not provided with sufficient marriage dowers, and men cannot afford to marry them without. The chief difficulty is not the insufficiency of men, the chief difficulty is the insufficiency of wealth. Provide all men, and provide all women, with a sufficiency of means, and the social problem will fade to a vanishing-point to-morrow.

Again, in the love of married folk for each other, the great factor is a sufficiency of coin. Novelists may not believe it, but the romance of marriage only begins when the bailiffs cease knocking at the door. The man who has exhausted every legitimate means within the range of his power to obtain cash, and who now meditates a raid upon a baker's barrow, is not an object calculated to inspire either affection or respect. As for "genteel" poverty, it either means a slow agony of starvation—mental, moral, and physical—or else it means county court summonses and unending petty frauds. If any one supposes that that is the school in which to cultivate matrimonial affection he is mistaken. What a frequent figure is the wife who despises the husband because of the lies she has to tell for him, and the husband who is conscious of a feeling of slight bitterness towards his better half because of the objections she makes when the bailiffs are, once more, either threatening or actually "in!"

Notice—ye who say that love cannot be bought—what a change takes place when the sun of prosperity begins once more to shine upon the struggling family; how love revives again; how Mr. Jones begins again to be regarded as a husband and a man; how Mrs. Jones makes much of him; she steals, half-shamefacedly, into his arms, she nestles her head upon his shoulder, he is, to her, once more, the Henry of the "golden days."

It is not humbug on the part of Mrs. Jones, it is human nature, it is an exemplification of the purchasing power of wealth. Do not run away with the impression that Mr. Jones has done some deed of derring-do, fought in a deathless fight and conquered; he has simply "landed" the first prize in the Hamburg lotteries, or "spotted" the winner in Capel Court or at Epsom. He has got money, and whether we own it or not, money is the god of our adoration, and rightly, too, for, from the cradle to the grave, money

brings to us, and money only, the glory and the joy of life.

Let us hasten on to the statement that health cannot be bought with money.

Has any one of the people who tell us this ever seen that striking spectacle, a train full of valetudinarians rushing South to escape the terrors of an English winter? I wonder! At certain seasons, these trains are running every day, and all day long. They are full, for the most part, with men and women who are buying, not only health, but in some cases life—actual life. They could not live, some of them, through a London winter; and as for working in it, Heaven help them all! Go to Madeira, to Teneriffe, go farther afield than that, to all the sanatoriums of the world, to the South Sea Islands if you will, go to a little place among the mountains, Davos Platz. You will find in these places crowds of people who are apparently in the enjoyment of robust health—because they can afford to buy it.

You can not only buy health—by which I mean good spirits instead of bad, enjoyment instead of misery, pleasure instead of pain—but you can buy life. I heard of a case the other day of a young woman who died in childbed. She was a labourer's wife, and she lived at a distance of several miles from the nearest doctor. They sent for the doctor; he wanted his fee in advance. They had not his fee; so the doctor did not go; and the woman died. Of course that was all right. It was the doctor's business in life to keep his head above the water; and if the woman could not afford to pay for life at the current market rates, she had to do without it.

Think of the men who are gradually or rapidly going blind because they cannot afford to rest their eyes. In how many trades and occupations is that going on? They have not the money with which to buy their eyesight, that is the plain English of the thing. Think of the people who are contracting diseases, in some cases incurable diseases, because, although they have health, they have not the money with which to buy the right to keep it. Do you know none of these people? Your experience of life has been a narrow one. The name of these folk is legion. Think of the people who have risen from a sick-bed, uncured, only to fall back again and die. Why? Merely because to continue sick was to starve; so that it was a case of dying anyhow. During the recent in-

fluenza epidemic a laundress—I must apologise for the vulgarity of my instances—I say a laundress contracted the fashionable complaint. She was my own laundress, you understand. She was a widow, and she had five small children, and there was the week's washing to do. So she got out of bed and she did it, and pneumonia ensued. So she died.

If the names of the people of whom that laundress was but a type—who could and who would have bought health if they had the money with which to buy it; who would even have bought for themselves long life—were written on the skies, the space allotted would hardly be found large enough to hold them.

And now for a word with those who tell us that wealth will not buy happiness. My gentle reader, what is happiness? You cannot tell? Ah! nor can I. But if happiness is the concomitant of an unstained conscience and the natural attribute of a righteous life well lived to the end, then I, for one, see no reason why a man with millions should not be able to purchase it. He, at any rate, is not forced to sin, while poor people—although the assertion may be contrary to the rulings of the high priests and Pharisees, whose own pockets are, as a rule, well lined—not seldom are.

Consider the man who has never earned more than thirteen shillings a week in his life, and then consider the millionaire. Which man has, on the face of it, the most chance of happiness—happiness of any and every kind? Is not the enquiry too preposterous? But then, you see, people are only just beginning to awake to the fact that there are vast hordes of so-called human beings who never have known, and who never will know, what it is to enjoy a moment's happiness from the cradle to the grave. Why? Because the money never comes their way with which to buy it. You will find these people in Eastern countries, where a poor man's life is frankly regarded as nothing, and less than nothing. You will find them in England—here, at your doors. You will find them in Russia, where, we are given to understand, they have liberty to starve. You will find them all over the continent of Europe. I do not doubt that there are one or two in the Australian continent. And many of us have seen them with our own eyes in the United States, that land of dollars.

Happiness is not to be had without

money, for this very simple reason: there is no happiness where there is no peace of mind, and there is no peace of mind—out of the story-books and the lunatic asylums—where there is no money. It is possible—if you like, it is probable—that a man can be happy who has a certain three hundred a year. But, if he is a man, and prolonged poverty has not made of him something akin to a brute—if that three hundred becomes three thousand he will find that his field of happiness widens; there will be more room to move about in it. If that three thousand becomes thirty thousand, he will find that it grows still wider. If more money does not mean more happiness, why do these millionaires stick to the shekels from which they say they derive no pleasure? The poor man is always willing to give up his poverty.

No, O millionaire, if the possession of wealth does not bring you happiness, it is your own fault; and, as some people are beginning to proclaim that if the pauper does not know happiness, that also is your fault, if you are not pretty spry, it looks as if you would have to bear that burden too.

The pity of it all—for nothing!

MĒNGĀMOK.

"HE is after me," is a much more serious thing than the now popular song implies. There is nothing at all amusing about it when "he" is a sturdy Malay running amok, kriss in hand. Such was my experience, and the words of the song very vividly recall the event to my mind. Many a truth is said in jest, and many a frivolous thing recalls a grave event. So it is in this instance, as my narrative will show.

At the time I was residing in the very heart of that portion of the world where the fanaticism of "amok" is most rife. The events I am about to relate took place in British North Borneo, in the capital, Sandakan.

Amok, amuck (or, more correctly, in Malay, mēngāmok), means "to slaughter indiscriminately," and the Malay who runs amok carries out the foregoing definition to a nicety. No one is safe, man, woman, or child, and the cry of "oran amok, oran amok," is the most startling and appalling that can well be imagined. Then and there

is hurrying to and fro, women catching up their children in hot haste, men scampering here and there, the slamming to of doors, mothers screaming to children they cannot find, the occasional report of a gun, the despairing yell of some fresh victim, and ever-increasing cries of the crowd in pursuit, until the whole place is ringing with the shouts of "oran amok."

Living where I did, the wonder is I saw so few cases, for running amok is a much commoner occurrence than people residing in these latitudes have any idea of. Probably a great number have no idea what amok is. It is a religious fanaticism, a madness, under which a man makes up his mind to kill any one he can, until he himself is killed. Brought on by drink, rage, or religion, or from whatever cause, the process is the same. The madman seizes his kriss and rushes headlong down the street, cutting at every one he meets. To any one who has seen a kriss or a parang further detail is unnecessary. A man running amok is as a dog with hydrophobia loose, but the panic caused by the former is by far the worse. Like the mad dog, the mad man is followed by a noisy rabble, who, sooner or later, run into their man and exterminate him. When this vengeful rabble is made up of bloodthirsty Malays and Chinamen, its wild rage and fury is beyond control, beyond description. The clamour and blood-curdling yells of the pursuing crowd, and the ever-nearing shout of "oran amok, oran amok," is an incident which can never be forgotten by any one who has seen or heard it. The bravest quails when suddenly turning the corner of a street his ears are greeted with the cry of "oran amok," and a few yards off he sees a Malay running straight at him, brandishing in his hand the bloody kriss with which he has already slaughtered all in his way. His hair flowing behind him, his sarong thrown away or torn off in a struggle, his naked chest reeking with blood, his eyes protruding from his head and twice their natural size, coming towards you with the rapidity of a deer, every muscle in his herculean little body swollen to its greatest tension, his kriss dripping with blood, his eyes upon you, with dire hate and determination gleaming from them, down he comes upon you, the whole place ringing with the cry of the ever-increasing and avenging crowd behind him, down upon you comes the "oran amok! oran amok!"

Yes, the bravest heart quails then. It

is so sudden, there is time for nothing; to turn and flee, "*saue qui peut*," self-preservation is the first idea naturally, but in most cases there is not time for this; it is the suddenness of the whole thing, the surprise, and the rapidity of everything which precludes escape. It is in this attempt to run away, the act of turning to flee, that moment of hesitation, which makes such easy victims to the kriss of the "*oran amok*." Nor is escape always easy, even if one had time, as the following relation of an amok will show.

Going out for a stroll one evening at Sandakau, Borneo's capital, I wended my way to the pier, or, more correctly, jetty, for let it be understood Sandakau is, though the capital of the second largest island in the world, only an embryo capital. Do not picture to yourself an ordinary pier crowded with the ordinary mashers, male and female, who stroll to the strains of the ordinary pier band. Sandakau has none of these, and though Borneo is literally infested with monkeys of all varieties, the genus *dude* has not yet been discovered amongst them. No, the Sandakau pier is a very rough-and-ready building made of unsawn timber, an erection far from ornamental, jutting out into the bay. Rough, uncouth, and temporary as it is, it is, however, quite sufficient to meet all the demands made upon it by the Sandakau shipping trade, for the inhabitants consider themselves very lucky if they hear from the outside world once a month. When the whistle of an approaching and long-expected steamer is heard, giving joyful tidings of her near approach, great is the commotion in Sandakau. Down flock the vast multitude of European residents to welcome her in and get their letters. The European population at the time the writer refers to was twenty-five—that was all; the census gave no trouble. Strolling out then, one evening, upon the Sandakau jetty, watching the native boats scudding about the bay, skimming along as only "*gobangs*" can, with most extraordinary velocity, and admiring their gaudy, but attractive, parti-coloured sails—for the Malays, like all Orientals, love gaudy colours, and always have the huge square sail of their "*gobang*" coloured like the rainbow, in arrangement and in taste most fantastic—suddenly I heard a distant hubbub over towards the Chinese quarter of the town. There was nothing unusual in this, for the Chinese in Sandakau were the scum of all China and the

Straits, runaways, renegades, gamblers, thieves, so that a row from that quarter, and that community, was not an untoward event. Some gambling fracas, I thought. One of the most lucrative taxes to the Bornean Government is that which is reaped from the Chinese gambling-hells in Sandakau. They are a Government monopoly, and the harvest is a very profitable and continual revenue. The noise becoming louder, nearer, and gradually growing into a perfect uproar, aroused my interest, and I stood with my back to the sea staring landwards, listening to what was going on in the distant town.

I was standing at the far end of the jetty, which stretches some fifteen to twenty chains out into the bay. There were a few Malays upon the jetty, strolling about in their picturesque and gay sarongs, with the inevitable cigarette in mouth. They are the most inveterate of cigarette smokers, the tobacco being curled up in twisted palm-leaf. Some were fishing from the jetty, their rods being long bamboo and their hooks crooked pins, for no one but a hadji could afford to buy a fish-hook, though there were a few of antediluvian pattern in the Chinese shops, or bazaars, as they are called. These people had been lolling about and had been fishing. It would be more correct to say that now, like my own, their whole interest was in the distant commotion going on in the town. They were all standing up, gazing eagerly in that direction, when suddenly one of them, more keen of hearing than his fellows, screamed out, "*Oran amok!*"

Yes; we all recognised it now. There was a man running amok right through the most populous quarter of the Chinese town. There was no mistaking the shout of "*oran amok!*" Away scampered the Malays as fast as they could to join the crowd, except one old chap, who, apparently not knowing I had overheard their excited conversation, came up to me to tell me what the hubbub was. The old man, gesticulating in a most excited manner, pointed out which way the amok was running, for, from where we were, we could see the crowd pouring down towards our end of the town—straight down towards the jetty.

Suddenly, at the far end of the jetty, I saw a wild figure running towards us at full speed. Surely this couldn't be the man running amok here on the jetty!

"*Seenie, seenie, amok, amok!*" ("*There, there's the amok!*") whispered the old man

in my ear, as he jumped off the end of the jetty into the sea.

I was alone on the jetty with the "oran amok." My first impulse was to jump into the sea, too. The old Malay was swimming like a fish, straight for the shore; but I could not swim a stroke. Here was an awkward predicament — I was literally between the devil and the deep sea.

I knew the sea was merciless; there was no hope there. My only chance was with the devil, coming straight towards me. The crowd seemed to have missed him, or he was a long way ahead of it. He did not see me, evidently mistaking me in the gloaming for one of the many posts to which the steamers made fast. I stood motionless. He was apparently under the impression that he had escaped from the crowd, and stopped when about half-way up the jetty, and turning round, stood still, looking landwards and listening intently.

I am not likely to forget that picture. There he stood, outlined against the setting sun, stark naked, not a stitch on him: a most powerfully built Malay, his head slightly bent forward listening; his parang, not a kriss, in his right hand; his left hand resting on his hip. He was about thirty years of age; his hair was cut close and was bristling up, and his right hand and arm were covered with coagulated blood; and every now and again he raised his parang and shook it at the crowd, which could be heard hunting for him in all directions but the right one.

Now, about half-way between where he stood and where I was I noticed a bamboo lying, which one of the Malays had been using as a fishing-rod. It was the only thing there was, and I had been pretty keen in my anxious observations for some weapon of defence. What was to be done? There it lay, about midway between us. If I started and made a rush for it, could I get there and pick it up before this awful fiend could get at me? That was the most momentous question.

He stood there with his back towards me, and I began to gently creep on tip-toe along towards the bamboo, ready to make a rush at any instant.

I was getting nearer and nearer, when the crowd appeared at the jetty. They sighted their man, and with shouts of vengeance rushed up the jetty in pursuit. There was no time to lose. I made a rush for the bamboo. The amok turned round, saw me, and with a wild yell, made

straight for me brandishing his parang above his head.

How vividly I see the whole thing now! How the scream of the amok rings in my ears! How I hear the voices in the crowd shouting: "Tuan mate, tuan mate!" ("He'll kill the master, he'll kill the master!") I got to the bamboo, stooped, picked it up, and raising it above my head ran on to meet my man. On he came; down came the bamboo. I had missed my mark, merely striking him on the right arm, which was raised above his head. The parang fell from his right hand, and before I knew what had happened, I was struggling madly in the amok's frenzied embrace.

How we struggled, and turned, and twisted, and rolled about on that jetty! Shall I ever forget it? The crowd was on us now, though, and kriss after kriss was struck into my assailant's body, and his grasp quickly got weaker and weaker, and I finally found that I was struggling with a dead man. I could not realise this, I myself was in a perfect frenzy. I was pulled off by the crowd. There the "oran amok" lay, literally cut to pieces; and again and again would one of the crowd send his kriss right up to the hilt in the quivering body.

The Malays are the most bloodthirsty and insatiable of all Orientals, their bloodthirstiness and rapacity only being outdone by their cowardice and treachery.

What a horribly sickening sight the whole thing was! My clothes were sopped with blood, and I turned away sick, and more in disgust at the sight than in relief at the narrow escape I had had in my tussle for life with the "oran amok."

Two men, one a Malay, the other a Chinaman, a woman, Chinese, and two children, both Chinese, had fallen to this man's mad fanaticism. Considering where he had run, the people must have been remarkably nimble in getting out of his way to have kept the death-roll so low.

THE TRIBUTE.

On the twelfth of May, on the Isle of Man
Rise with the dawning all who can;
Let the old and sad send messengers out
To search the inlets round and about,
For the currant-plant blows rare and red
Where the glens lie under the rocky Head.
And every door must have crosses bright
Hung on the lintel-bar to-night.

For the fairy folks will have tribute due,
Though the strangers may call our creed untrue,
And the young among us, below their breath,
May laugh o'er the very spell they breathe;
But for those who in wonted homage fail
Their barques will founder without a gale;
The blight or the drought to their crops will come,
And their herds reproach them in sorrow dumb.

There is Claque on Carrin remembers yet
The year that he would not pay his debt;
For the fleet came back with their harvest done,
His creels were empty, his nets were gone.
And Clucas will own, upon Greeba side
In the flush of the heather, his yearlings died;
And Kermoder tells how in Niabyl Bay,
His first-born drowned on the twelfth of May.

To rise with the morning, lad and lass,
Seek the currant-plant 'mid the dew-pearled grass,
Where the bluebells nod o'er the marshy ground,
The best are its rosy clusters found;
Fashion the cross as our fathers did,
Ere the strange new learning old wisdom hid;
And to shield your homestead from ill or harm
Hang o'er the threshold the fairies' charm.

A SWEET SINGER.

A COMPLETE STORY.

I HAD had a first-rate morning's fishing in the swift, shallow river, which went rushing about in such wondrous loops and bends among the labyrinth of hills which obstructed its course. I was just proudly landing a splendid specimen from the deep pool below the platform of rock on which I was standing, when Jean Baptiste, my luncheon-basket over his shoulder, hove in sight round a jutting crag. I liked Jean Baptiste; I admired his fine, regular features, his tall, military figure, his dignified self-possession, his innate gentleness, and I loved to hear his simple stories of the events which had fallen within the limited range of his experience.

"A la bonne heure, Jean Baptiste," I cried, airing the French which in these Ardennes wilds was making such fine progress. "I will eat my luncheon where I am, and then continue operations; this pool is in perfect condition." Jean Baptiste said nothing; his handsome face showed scanty assent. "You don't agree with me," I went on. "Hasn't piscatory fortune favoured you here?"

"It is very long since I fished here, monsieur," he answered gravely.

"And why?" I asked, "if one may risk the question."

"Well, monsieur," he began doubtfully, "it's an old story."

Now Jean Baptiste was great at old stories; moreover, it was my privilege as

foreigner and guest to hear many things concerning which he might have been less communicative to those who knew him better, so I said coaxingly:

"An old story, Jean Baptiste; why, that is all that is necessary to make this spot and my enjoyment perfect. How old is it?"

"It is thirty years old," he replied.

"Thirty years, best of landlords; but that is nothing."

He smiled gravely.

"You are pleased to say so, monsieur; anyhow we were all thirty years younger then, which is something; and I and my brother Eugène were considered the two best matches in the village. Our father, Jean Louvet, was then the landlord of the inn, where we now reign in his stead; he owned, too, the biggest farm in the place, not excepting Monsieur Bersier's, the burgomaster. In our house there was plenty of work and plenty of room for a couple of daughters-in-law, if Eugène and I had cared to go a wooing; but, somehow, we didn't care, though hints had been given from several quarters in which we should be welcome. The burgomaster grumbled that our father had given us too much education and raised us above our equals, and the girls used to chaff and say that Eugène was so wrapped up in his music and I was so wrapped up in him, that we had no thoughts for courting. There may have been a little truth in all this; certainly Eugène could play on our church organ as no one else could, and music was his greatest pleasure; that was how it was he persuaded my father to let him go once—thirty years ago—to Antwerp, for the Feast of the Assumption; he wanted to hear the fine masses sung in the great cathedral church. It was settled, too, that on his way back he should stay with our uncle at Gembloux, and see something of the lowland harvesting of which we had heard so much. All this meant that he would be away three weeks or a month, and it was in the first days of his absence that the great event of my life came to pass.

"One evening—this was how it befell—in comes Monsieur Bersier a full half hour earlier than the time for his usual evening pint; he had an open letter in his hand, and a look of perplexity on his honest face.

"'Jean Louvet,' he said to my father, 'I want your very good advice.'

"'You're welcome to it,' said my father, handing him his tankard.

"'You remember my sister,' went on Bersier, 'who married Darcy, the confectioner, in Brussels!'

"My father nodded. It was known that Darcy, the confectioner, had proved himself a very bad husband.

"'Well, she's dead, poor thing,' and he paused.

"'Poor thing,' echoed my mother; 'and isn't there a little girl?'

"'There was a little girl, Madame Louvet, by your leave; but she's a big girl now, and the question is what's to become of her. Marie is her name. Her mother used to write me long letters about her. She might be married and settled now, if she had had a "dot," but where's a "dot" to come from when the father drinks and wastes his substance?'

"I don't know what it was roused me to a kind of anger at this—not entirely against the spendthrift father either.

"'It isn't much of a man who would think the want of "dot" an obstacle to marriage.'

"'How do you know?' said the burgomaster. 'You, perhaps, can afford to take a girl without a sou, but every man cannot.'

"'Every man can work,' I began, but the burgomaster interrupted me.

"'Well, anyway, there was a young man her mother wrote to me about who was not of your way of thinking, and there was a kind of beginning which came to an untimely ending, and I'm not sorry, for a struggle for life in Brussels is not what I should wish for the girl's fate. But now, Louvet, I come to the part that requires your advice. The girl wants to come to me. She can't live with her father, and she's scarcely old enough to live by herself and work for her living, even if she knew how to earn it. But it's not so easy either for an old widower, like me, to take charge of a girl of eighteen.'

"He stopped, and my father smoked thoughtfully. It was my mother who spoke.

"'Let her come,' she said; 'maybe I can help to look after her a bit.'

"'Will you?' cried Bersier gratefully. 'Well, that would make it all right and straight.' So, after a good deal of talk it was settled that Marie should come.

"Now, I expect you will think that I was a great fool for a man of two-and-thirty if I tell you all that went through my mind while that talk was

going on. I had scarcely heard of Marie Darcy's existence before that evening, yet I felt as drawn to her as if she had some right and claim to me; and further, there was a kind of awe in my heart, as if my life were about to change, and never be so still and peaceful any more. It was such a strange feeling, half hope and half fear, that, even if Eugène had been at home, I could not have mentioned it to him; yet I did not try to put it away, I rather encouraged it and dwelt on it until the third day after, when, as I came home with the last load of barley, the burgomaster's char-à-banc passed me, I saw Marie Darcy for the first time.

"I knew she would be pretty, though no one had told me so; but naturally I had not pictured her as she was. Her bright chestnut hair clustered about her forehead in dainty little curls, peeping from beneath her heavy crape hat; her eyes were large and dark, and her face clear and pale; she was slenderly built and graceful, and the sound of her voice was all the sweeter by contrast with our rough Walloon accent. This I soon had an opportunity of hearing, for when she had rested a while after her journey, her uncle brought her to see my mother, and I stood by while she told her first impressions. She already loved our village, she said, having heard so much of it from her poor dear mother; she was going to be very contented among us and not regret Brussels. She glanced at me as she said this, and I, who never made pretty speeches to girls, said that it would be our fault and our misfortune if she did. At which she laughed and asked me if I knew Brussels, to which I said no.

"'Ah,' cried my father, 'it is my son Eugène who will be the traveller; when he comes back you can talk of Brussels with him.'

"'Oh,' she said sweetly, 'I shall not talk of Brussels now; I shall give my mind to learning all about this new home, which I am so fortunate to find, and for which I am so thankful.'

"Then she sighed, and I thought of the man who had not had the courage to make a home for her in the shelter of his love. It was hard to understand how he could have been so cold-hearted.

"'She's not the girl, is she, Bersier, to be long in want of a home of her own?' said my father, looking from her to me. He was much given to jokes on the subject of

marriage; but something in his face seemed to say this time that the joke might be earnest. Marie Darcy blushed, and I fancied she sighed again. I felt so sorry for her that I longed to comfort her. You will think, perhaps, that I had made up my mind beforehand to fall in love with her. It sounds like it, anyhow; and after that first evening I had every opportunity. She was often with my mother, who took to her very kindly; and I, too, often had reasons for going to the burgo-master's. Moreover, every one and everything seemed to encourage me, and to make it easy for me to see her continually; and every day my father or the burgo-master used to drop the plainest of hints as to their wishes in the matter. As to Marie herself, she was always pleased to see me, and had plenty to say to me; yet when we had talked and laughed together for a pleasant hour, when she had chattered a little of the ways of the big city she had left behind, and I had told her the small events of the quiet village to which she had come, I never felt as if I was any nearer to her than I was that first evening when she passed me in her uncle's char-a-banc. But I remembered the difference she must see between me and the young men she had been used to talk to, and I schooled myself to think that with patience and perseverance on my part, she would some day hear gladly that she was the one woman in the world I had been waiting for till I was past thirty years of age.

"Among her other charms, Marie had a wonderfully beautiful voice, and her father had spent a heap of money in giving her fine singing lessons. Now and again she would seat herself at the harmonium Eugène had bought for himself, and try to accompany herself in some of the songs she had learnt; but it didn't go, and she always gave up in vexation.

"When Eugène comes back he will accompany you," my mother used to say.

"He must play very well if he is to accompany me in this," she would answer, turning over her music, "or this—or this. I can't play them a bit, and I've had lessons at the Conservatoire."

"But Eugène does play very well," I said.

"Does he?" she would say doubtfully; and I used to long for Eugène to come back, that she might see what a clever

brother I had, and that he might tell me what he thought of the beautiful girl I was trying to win for my wife. Ah, monsieur, if I could only tell you how full my heart was then, and yet so light!

"So at last it came to the day of Eugène's return, and I went on foot to meet him at Bouillon, where he would leave the diligence. He had a great deal to tell me, as we walked up hill and down through the beautiful woodland on our homeward way—of Antwerp and the great festival; of our relations at Gembloux, and the improvements in farming on that rich soil; of the day he had spent at Brussels; and so on from one thing to another; and as he was a much better talker than I was, I didn't interrupt him, until, at last, he began to speak of a certain beautiful soprano voice which had taken the solos in one particular mass he had heard in the cathedral at Antwerp.

"Oh, Jean Baptiste," he cried, "that mass haunts me so. If we could only have it in our church. If only some one could sing those solos."

"Perhaps we could have it, Eugène," I said, thinking of Marie.

"He shook his head.

"My dear brother," he replied, "if you only knew! Why even if we had such a voice at our command, how about the training? I know how the thing ought to sound; but I haven't the knowledge to teach, and the voice isn't to be found among these hills."

"But, Eugène," I said, "remember you've been away long enough to find more in the village than you are familiar with. I told you in my letter that M. Bersier's niece has come to live with him. Well, she has a voice just such as you describe, and she has had lessons at the Brussels Conservatoire, and if you have heard anything more beautiful than her singing in Antwerp, you must have heard something equal to choirs of angels."

"Jean Baptiste," he cried, "is it possible? And do you think she would give her voice and her time to the service of the Church for a while? I have dreamt of hearing it all once again, and we must persuade Monsieur le Curé to let a woman sing for once in the church." And he went on, so pleased at what he had learnt, that he asked no more about her, while a kind of shyness came over me, so that I could not tell him my secret as I had at first meant to do.

"Over our supper that evening there were a great many questions to be asked and answered, and before nearly all was said, in walked the burgomaster and Marie.

"We have come to see the traveller," said Bersier, 'and the child will like to hear news of the world she is cut off from.'

"I watched Eugène as he looked at Marie Darcy for the first time. It meant much to me that my brother should approve of the girl I had set my heart on.

"You, monsieur, who know Eugène now in his old age, can scarcely imagine how eloquent his face was thirty years ago. I saw that her beauty charmed his eye, but that the chief thought in his mind in connection with her was her voice, and that he was longing to get so far in his acquaintance with her as to be able to broach the great subject. But as soon as he began to relate his experience of Antwerp to the burgomaster, dwelling on the glorious music he had heard, Marie herself made the subject easy for him.

"I know the mass you mean,' she said; 'I have studied it. Madame Louvet, I have tried to sing you some of it, only, you know, I couldn't play as well as sing, and every time I failed. Monsieur Eugène, they used to tell me you would accompany me when you came back.'

"Then every one laughed to see the animation with which Eugène sprang up and went to his harmonium.

"Shall I fetch the notes?' said Marie. 'I've been longing to sing—only are you sure you can play it?'

"I'll try," said Eugène modestly.

"I will come with you and carry the book.'

"What a lad it is for music!' cried my father. 'After his long journey, too; but Jean Baptiste, you might go and carry the book.'

"Don't trouble, Jean," said Eugène, just as if it was he who had known Marie for weeks and I who was the stranger.

"As I said, we had all thought Marie's voice wonderful from the first; but it was only when I heard it with a good accompaniment that I realised how perfect her singing was. As the last note died away, Eugène turned round and looked up at her in silence. Her face was turned so that I could not see it, but what I read on his gave me the key to that strange fear which the first mention of Marie's history

had brought me. 'I might have guessed,' I said to myself, 'that he would love her, too, and what girl would listen to my wooing when Eugène is there to charm away her heart?'

"I got up, made an excuse about the cattle, and went out. I was very thankful that I had not spoken of my feelings for her on our homeward walk. He would have loved her all the same, and she would have loved him in return, but perhaps he would have feared to win her and do me a wrong; now he should have his fair chance. In all the bitterness of that moment I had a fierce joy in feeling that I could make this sacrifice willingly for my brother—yes, and for her.

"I thought, when next he and I were alone together, that he would talk a great deal of Marie. Of her singing certainly he did, and of her kindness in entering into his project for a great festival mass in our church, but of his personal impressions he said no word; he was waiting, perhaps, for me to begin; but that was, as you may say, the last straw which I could not bear to add to my burden.

"After that I left off going to Bersier's, and when Marie came to my mother I made no excuses to be with her. She came very often, too, for every day she sang with Eugène, and every day I could see that he was more enchanted with her. Once my father laughed at me when we were alone together.

"Ah, mon fils," he said, shaking his head, 'you're a sad fellow. I thought you were booked this time, but—I fear you're a bit of a flirt. I hope Eugène isn't going to follow your example. You see the poor girl has had one disagreeable affair—it's marvellous to see how well she has got over it; but I wouldn't like to see her put in a false position again by any one belonging to me.'

"I haven't put her in any false position," I said. I felt so unhappy that he thought I was angry. 'I've said nothing to her.'

"Well, you needn't blaze up, lad. As to what you said, that may have been cautious enough; only I, and your mother, and the burgomaster went by what you did. However, I'll say no more. I suppose you're too hardened a bachelor to change your ways.'

"I dare say I am," I rejoined.

"Besides," he added, consolingly, 'it's as well you weren't in earnest, for it strikes

me the wind of her favour sits in another quarter.'

"That was what every one was beginning to say, and as I watched them I felt sure of it, on his side at least; and as to hers, I could only guess, not knowing how women show or conceal that kind of thing.

"All Saints' Day—the dedication festival of our church—was the day Monsieur le Curé chose for the fulfilment of Eugène's project, and there were in consequence great preparations. It was quite the right day for such a performance, for the few in the village who never went to church at any other time were accustomed to go then; so that the building would be as full as it could hold, and, owing to the special attraction, seats would be placed in every available corner.

"Eugène looked so happy when all was arranged that the mere sight of him made me almost forget the bitterness which had marred my life for the past two months.

"It will be a good day for getting their affair settled," said my father to me as we walked to church. He meant the affair between Eugène and Marie, and I assented.

"I wasn't myself much of a singer, but I generally sat among the tenors in the south gallery, to do what I could to swell the chorus. My place was behind Marie Darcy, and as I sat there I began to wonder if it were possible that their betrothal would be settled that very day, and how I should feel when she said 'thee and thou' to me. I had more than once imagined her addressing me in that way, only on a very different footing from that on which we were now going to be placed. So I went on musing until the service had begun, and Monsieur le Curé was reading the Gospel. Just then I saw a stranger enter the church, and make his way up the central aisle. Strangers, of course, there might be on such an occasion; still, I noticed this one. He had, to me, the air of a person quite out of keeping with the surroundings into which he had come. Moreover, the assurance with which he worked his way into a prominent place, and the coolness with which he looked about him, gave the impression that if not a person of importance, he certainly fancied himself to be such. After he had taken his place he still kept turning and looking about, till at last I felt quite angry with his manner, though he had not once glanced at our choir gallery. Then

I pulled myself up for inattention. The Gospel was ended; we were going to sing the Creed. I glanced at Eugène as he sat at the organ. His face was radiant. Marie's head was bent over her book. I fancied she looked nervous; but that I could understand, seeing that it is not a woman's province to be heard in church. After the first few bars, however, her glorious voice rose up pure and clear above all our rough, uncultivated ones. I was not astonished to see the impertinent stranger turn with a start, and look eagerly for the singer; but again I lost patience with him when he fixed his eyes upon her, and scarcely turned them away until the last words of the mass were said. Then I took no more notice of him; I hurried to the organ to congratulate my brother, who was playing the closing voluntary as I had never heard him play before. The other members of the choir lingered, too; they were all pleased with themselves and him. But when he had struck the last chord, and I looked about me, I saw that Marie had disappeared. He saw it too, evidently, for, pressing my hand without a word, he hurried away, and, as I stayed behind pushing in the stops and putting away the music, I tried to feel brave, and to teach myself that she must be first with him now, and that I should soon get used to it and fall into my new place. Of the stranger I thought no more.

"We were sitting down to dinner when Eugène came in.

"We know what has kept you, Eugène," said my mother, 'no need to ask.'

Eugène blushed and laughed.

"I'll tell without asking, then," he said.

"I've been with Monsieur le Curé; he caught me as I was leaving the church, and only let me go when I told him that his dinner and mine would be getting cold."

"Just what you might expect from Monsieur le Curé," laughed my father; 'if ever there was a man who cannot see through a ladder, it is he.'

"I could not joke on the subject, so I ate my meal in silence.

"After dinner my father uncorked a bottle of old wine, and was just filling our glasses when Monsieur Bersier arrived.

"You have come extremely opportunely, my friend," cried my father. 'We are going to drink some one's health.'

"He reached another glass, but the burgomaster did not sit down with us;

he walked uneasily to and fro in the room.

"Don't be in a fidget, burgomaster," went on my father. "I can guess what you have come to say. We can all guess."

"Can you?" said the other drily. "I wish you could."

"Well," began my father, "it concerns a certain fair warbler, and——"

"You're right so far, Père Louvet," the burgomaster interrupted, "but even there it isn't quite as you think, and there is nothing for it but for me to tell you. You know, I spoke before she came of a marriage—or at least, of a lover she had had in Brussels, who had given her up because she had no "dot." I did not know the ins and outs. I remember Jean Baptiste came to the conclusion that he was a poor sort of lover. Well, I know the story better now, together with a fresh chapter which you must hear. The young man was a fellow-pupil of Marie's at the Conservatoire; he had scarcely a sou to live upon, and though he passed his examinations as an opera singer with éclat, he got no engagement. I believe he was nearly starving, when about a month ago, the tenor at the 'Monnaie' fell ill, and this lad's professor managed to shove him in as a stop-gap. He took the public by storm. If we saw the Brussels papers we should have read of his success and been none the wiser. The old tenor died, and the youngster's fortune was made." He paused, and looked at us each in turn; no one spoke, so he went on: "He's a good sort of lad, I've had it all out with him. He came to her as soon as he could. He was in church to-day. It seems that she has loved him all along, and meant to wait for him—for ever, if necessary—and so, you see, we must not grudge them their joy, and I shall give her a couple of thousand francs for her trousseau."

"So the good old man rambled on, because he did not know how to leave off. Eugène rose from his seat and went softly away. The tears were running down my mother's face.

"Jean Baptiste," she whispered, "go after him. If any one can comfort him, you can."

"I followed him readily enough. When I got outside he was just disappearing along the rugged path opposite the church, which leads, as you know, monsieur, to the steep wooded banks of the river. I could not come up with him, he was walking so fast,

but when he reached the shelter of the woods he slackened his pace. So did I, for I was beginning to feel that I dare not intrude upon his trouble, much as I wanted to be near him; so I kept behind him. He did not hear my steps on the damp, fallen leaves. On he went, and on. It was a grey, chilly afternoon, and the black rocks frowned from among the half-naked trees. Presently he reached the river-side, and turned into that rough little path along which you have fished this morning, and which has led you here. Eugène was walking very slowly now; sometimes he stopped altogether and looked into the river, and every now and then—my heart aches still to think of it—he put his hands before his face and groaned. There was no one else in sight but him and me. A few crows were flying about the meadow on the other bank. Everything looked unspeakably dreary. He went on round the big bend of the river in the same way, till at last he reached this rock. Here he stopped, just where you are sitting, and stood looking down into the deep black pool. I dare not let him know then that I was behind him, so I drew back behind that jutting crag, and watched him cautiously. I thought that he would probably go no further, and that as he turned back I would speak to him. But the minutes passed and became half an hour; still he did not stir. At last I saw him drop on his knees, and lift his hands to his head.

"My God," he cried aloud, little thinking I could hear, "my God, bless her, and make her happy, and forgive me if it be sin to die when I dare not live!"

"He stood up and looked first one way and then the other. His face was ghastly pale. I seemed to see it rising and floating on the water below, as it might have risen had I not been there. I sprang forward and seized his arm.

"Mon frère," I cried, "have courage!"

"He turned fiercely upon me.

"If you knew what the struggle is, you would know that there is no use to speak of courage."

"Eugène," I whispered, putting my arms about him and drawing him back, "I know more of the struggle than you think. I loved her before you ever saw her; I have known what giving her up means ever since you have loved her."

"As I spoke, I laid my face against his breast; so we stood for a while, and then he let me lead him home.

"The next day he told my father he

would like to go to Gembloux again, and learn a little more about scientific farming from our uncle.

"Marie Darcy's wedding was fixed for the New Year; and in the meanwhile she came continually to my mother for help and advice over her trousseau.

"What a terrible pity!" she said, when she heard that Eugène had gone, and would not return till the spring. 'I should so much have liked him to play at my wedding. Albert thinks him a really fine performer, and Albert is, of course, a judge.'

"Albert was her fiancé. I believe he sings now at the great Opera in Paris, and is as much a favourite as ever with the public after thirty years. Eugène and I are, as you know, two old bachelors; and it is the memory of that most solemn moment of our lives which keeps us from ever trying our luck as fishermen in this pool."

THE THIRTEENTH BRYDAIN.

By MARGARET MOULE.

Author of "Catherine Maidment's Burden," "Donsfit of Clergy," "Mr. Wingrove's Ways," "The Vicar's Aunt," "Dick's Wife," etc.

CHAPTER XXV.

"MACKENZIE," called out Brydain from the door of the dining-room, "Mackenzie, what do you say to a day's fishing with me?"

A shambling walk which might have been heard at the first summons in the long passage leading to the kitchen, quickened audibly at the second, and at the last words something approaching a run took Mackenzie across the hall to his master.

"Fishing!" he responded eagerly. "I'll come and willing, Brydain. I must tell the women, and give William Finlay his work for the day first. But you will not be going at once? I'll accompany you, Brydain," he reiterated, as if not quite sure that he had made his meaning clear.

It was the morning following Brydain's arrival at the Great House; and he looked, even after only one night's rest in it, so much better for his native air, that Tredennis would have been indeed rejoiced to see the change in him.

He had eagerly scrutinised on his first coming downstairs, at half-past eight, that special corner of the oak sideboard on which the letters were always accustomed to be laid.

There were none; but after a moment's sensation of blankness, he was not really surprised or disappointed. Etenne Far-rant could only have received his note to tell her of his going yesterday, he told himself, and how could she write at once? He must be patient still, he reasoned.

During breakfast, he had thought over several plans for gratifying Mackenzie, on this first day, with as much of his society as possible, and had decided on this one of a day's fishing.

Mackenzie hurried away with his last words to perform the two duties of which he had spoken. The "telling of the women" was accomplished with much vociferous direction to Mrs. Mackenzie as to what Brydain and he, Mackenzie, would want for lunch, and for supper when they returned, some of which directions floated up the passage and reached Brydain's own amused ears.

"You'll have the supper ready by six," he heard. "And you'll give us sweet bread now with the luncheon. Brydain was always for sweet bread, and he'll not have eaten it for a year, you ken. They will not be giving him any in that evil, smoking place he's come from."

With this comprehensive description of London, Mackenzie apparently sought his subordinate and helper, William Finlay, for his voice faded away in the distance, and Brydain heard no more. He proceeded to prepare himself for the day's expedition. A search for his favourite fishing-rod—which Mackenzie had stowed away—took him nearly half an hour, at the end of which time Mackenzie presented himself once more in the hall, breathless, but ready, and the two set out.

The stream to which they proposed first to turn their steps was on the other side of the hills, and the shortest way to reach the road running across the hills would have been a sharp turn as they came out of the Great House, which would have led them across at the head of the ravine.

But Mackenzie explained that he had an errand to a house at the opposite end of Brydain, and he therefore begged Brydain to accompany him just through the village, and then cross the ravine by its lower end. Brydain assented willingly enough. He was anxious to see again the familiar faces

which he had known all his life long. It had been too late as he drove up to the Great House the evening before to see any one.

He was quite unconscious of the fact that Mackenzie had planned and invented the errand in question solely and simply that he himself might have the glory of assisting at Brydain's first reappearance in the village; and in his excitement at having accomplished this end, Mackenzie talked so fast that Brydain could scarcely find time in which to look about him. He did look about him, however, and the effect upon him of the familiar scene was instantaneous. He felt, looking down the little street, with its angles and corners all softened in the hazy grey of the morning air, as if all the intervening months were an excited dream and he had never really been away. It was so exactly like one of the long-past mornings of years gone by in which he had set out on the same sort of expedition, to the same place, by the same way. He almost expected, vaguely, to hear his father's voice speak to him, so entirely had he gone back to the old life. He was a boy at home again, with all his life before him, and knowing nothing of any difficulty, any suspense, or trouble. Even Mackenzie's unceasing conversation at his side was only like an accustomed background to his thoughts.

Suddenly, just before they reached the first house in Brydain, Brydain's thoughts and Mackenzie's talk were abruptly broken in upon. A small boy walked sturdily up to Brydain and planted himself immediately in his way. Brydain stared and started, and finally laughed. Mackenzie said angrily:

"Where's your manners, Tammas?" and snatched the cap off the boy's head.

"You're Tom Sanderson, young man, aren't you?" said Brydain with a smile. "I carried you on my shoulder when I went away. Is it a ride you're wanting now, eh?"

"I am going in school," announced the youth proudly. "I ken small writing, and I ken a' the arithmetic."

Brydain laughed.

"And with all that learning, you're above a ride? Well, Tommy, run home and tell mother and father that I'm coming to see them this evening."

After this advance guard had been thus disposed of, the greetings Brydain had to meet were many. The next was a woman who had once been a servant at the Great

House. She ran out eagerly to greet them, and with her greetings she mingled many confused and excited statements to the effect that she had been the first to see his "printed name." This puzzled Brydain not a little. Nor was his wonder set at rest until his much-interrupted progress had reached old Elspeth's cottage. Mackenzie had just left him there, to accomplish his own errand, when the same woman ran up with a small newspaper cutting in her hand.

"You ken all Brydain has read it!" she said with intense pride, obviously reflected from great doings of Brydain's.

Brydain turned round from his talk with old Elspeth to look at the scrap held out to him. It was a paragraph copied from a London into a Glasgow paper, and contained a mention of Brydain's name as being about to sing at the concert which had just taken place.

"My Sandy says they write overmuch in London, and it canna be all true?" she said questioningly.

Brydain briefly answered her, and also her subsequent query as to whether he had really sung at the concert in question. And it was with a mind wholly set at rest and gratified that she ran home again to restore what was now stamped for ever as a priceless treasure to its abiding-place in her best teapot.

Brydain turned back to old Elspeth as the woman disappeared; but it was a very different Brydain that did so. The unexpected contact with the slight chance reminder of his daily life had brought it all vividly before him again. He was no longer a boy in Brydain village; he was a man who had braved his fate, and was waiting and struggling for patience to see the result. His face changed completely. It had been boyishly elated and eagerly excited in expression; now it was suddenly anxious, wearied, and far from being boyish. Old Elspeth's next words seemed to fall on his suddenly roused anxiety like an omen.

"I'm thinking of you day by day, laddie," she said, "and I'm fearing for you."

Before she could say more, Brydain answered with a quickness which was in curious contrast to the slow, old quavering voice:

"It's very good of you to think of me, Elspeth," he said; "but you must think of me as working hard all the time."

At that moment Mackenzie came back, and the two took leave of old Elspeth, and crossed the ravine.

"Such havers!" said Mackenzie, in pretended contempt for the excitement of the village at Brydain's return. "Not but what I could wish them to be glad to see you in your ain rightful home again, Brydain. It's a sight for sair een, and that's the truth," he ended, with an unconscious pathos in the last words, and the proud look at his master with which he accompanied them. "You're looking tired, Brydain," he added anxiously, before Brydain could speak; "and I thought you looking better the morn. Will you be giving up the fishing?"

Brydain, whose mind was still far away from the hills, the fishing, or Mackenzie himself, started at the direct question, and pulled himself together with an effort.

"Tired! No, Mackenzie," he said, smiling, "I'm not such a poor thing as that. I'm good for a twenty-mile walk over the heather yet; and five miles will see us at Greenmuir, if I don't mistake."

Mackenzie's whole face beamed at the words and the reassuring tone. "Five miles only; you're right, Brydain," he said delightedly. And then there was a short silence while the two tramped steadily over the hill. The morning was warm, but grey; it had, as yet, none of the brilliant sunshine of the preceding day, but the soft, broken sky gave promise of beauty yet to come. The dew was yet on the grass and the springing heather, and their footsteps left a dark track in its pearly-gray whiteness. Mackenzie it was who broke the silence at length:

"And what will you be doing in London, Brydain?" he said. "You say aye in your letters that you are very busy, and working at the music; but I do not altogether understand."

"Oh, I work hard, Mackenzie, I assure you. There's no deception about me!" Brydain turned a smiling face to his companion.

"I believe you," was the instant answer. "I believe you well, Brydain; but I dinna ken what you find to do. You have friends with whom you are acquant; that I well understand; but you canna be aye with your friends."

"I practise almost all day."

"I do not take your meaning," responded Mackenzie. "What is it you mean by practise?"

"I sing, and I study music; but most of the time I sing."

Mackenzie stopped short, and stood perfectly still in the heather, and gazed at Brydain.

"You will na tell me that you sing tunes every hour of the whole blessed day!" he exclaimed.

"I sing other things as well," said Brydain, laughing.

"But you'll be for making a noise the whole of the time! My certie, and I wonder how those that are in the house can live with you, Brydain? And there are more than yourself that do the same in London?"

"Hundreds," said Brydain gravely.

"It's a marvel to me, then, that the whole of the inhabitants are not leaving it for another town. It must be like a madhouse."

"I'm sorry you think so little of singing, Mackenzie," was the laughing answer.

"I do not think little of aught you do," Mackenzie said eagerly. "But it passes my comprehension; and, I gather, Brydain, that there are those who have paid money to hear you sing?"

"There are," Brydain answered.

"And you are thought much of, and respected for your singing! Ah, well, it is a strange and a light thing for a man to be respected for; but there are strange folk abroad!"

With this reflection Mackenzie gave a heavy sigh, and there was another little silence. Brydain was enjoying the fresh spring morning air, and thinking of the prospect of sport for the day, when Mackenzie spoke again. This time it was in a very different tone. It was low and full of fear.

"Brydain," he said, "I asked you in a letter, and you gave me no answer. You have written to me of your friends, of many folk. Do you see women among them? Do you keep in mind the number, Brydain?"

To Mackenzie's confusion, Brydain turned on him with a sharp, sudden movement, and an incoherent sound of uncontrollable passion. His eyes blazed with anger, and his face was suddenly white with wrath.

"Will you remember this, Mackenzie?" he said from between his clenched teeth. "I never intend to have that—" his agitated lips tried to say "nonsense," but they would not frame the word—"that

story mentioned in my presence again. Never. You fully understand me?"

There was an embarrassed silence; Mackenzie did not speak in answer. He was trembling, and hopelessly confused and alarmed by the shock he had received from his master's manner and words. Brydain's lips closed into a resolute set line; his face was very pale, but there was the same resolution in his blue eyes, which he kept fixed steadily on the distant horizon.

A quarter of an hour passed, and the two tramped on without saying a word. At the end of that time, Brydain, with an obvious effort to regain his ordinary manner, turned to Mackenzie.

"It's getting rather brighter, Mackenzie," he said. "What do you think is the best part of the stream to try if the sun comes out?"

Mackenzie glanced rather fearfully up at his master's face. Seeing there, however, a semblance of Brydain's ordinary self, he answered with a lessening of his trepidation, and the discussion on general subjects which began, lasted, with slight breaks, till they reached Greenmuir.

CHAPTER XXVI.

It was about half-past six when Mackenzie and his master, the one carrying a heavy basket of trout, the other the empty luncheon-basket, reached the Great House again. Mackenzie went up the steps of the front door after Brydain rather wearily.

"Eh, Brydain," he exclaimed, as he entered the hall, "eh, but my bones are older than yours, and they're stiff."

"We've had a very long day, Mackenzie," responded Brydain.

"Not an hour too long," said Mackenzie hastily. "It's naught but the on-coming of my latter years!" he added. "Susan!" he called, "Susan Mackenzie! I wish to remind her of your supper, Brydain," he added; "and you'll be wishing some trout for it, I'm thinking."

There was no immediate response, and Mackenzie, not without some grumbling, prepared to take up the basket he had set down on his entrance and make his way to the kitchen.

"Do you want mother, Uncle Donald?" said a voice close beside him, and Marjory Mackenzie's slight figure emerged from the long passage, and curtsied in acknowledgement of Brydain's smile and

his "Good evening, Marjory." She took the basket from her uncle's hand.

"What is it you want mother for?" she said. "She is gone to Jane Margetson to get her recipe for scones. She intended making some for breakfast to-morrow, and she thought you would not be home yet."

"We are at home, you perceive," responded Mackenzie drily, "and the master's wishing for supper."

"I will get it," the girl answered, and before Mackenzie could gather his scattered energies together to follow her, she had disappeared again, with the basket in her hand, down the long passage.

"A handy sort of girl," said Brydain, as he took off his cap; "quick and intelligent, I should imagine, Mackenzie?"

"If the lass chooses, she can do fairly well," was the cautious answer. "She will choose to do well at present, for I intend she should."

With this oracular expression of his authority over his niece, Mackenzie followed her into the kitchen premises, and for the next half-hour a confused medley of sounds issued along the passage, consisting of Marjory's inaudible words, Mackenzie's commands, and all the sounds of cooking and preparation. At the end of that time Brydain was sitting down in the grey evening light to supper in the dining-room, and Mackenzie, having seen that his master had everything he needed, had returned to the kitchen.

Mrs. Mackenzie had by this time come home, and Mackenzie, having very briefly explained matters to his sister-in-law, sat down by the fire to wait until she should take off her outdoor things.

He was very silent as he sat there by the fire; his eyes were fixed upon it; and Marjory, as she went about the room making ready the table under her mother's directions, caught the sound of a heavy sigh. She turned quickly towards her uncle; but no explanation, even in the form of a grumble, was forthcoming; and she went on with what she was doing mechanically enough. All her actions throughout the day had been mechanical, for her mind had been far away from them.

Since the moment when she had helped her mother pack his luncheon-basket, and then, unobserved herself, had watched Brydain set out, her whole mind and thoughts had been with him and him alone, and she had followed his actions

mentally all day long. And this evening, as soon as her mother's absence left her alone, she had watched for his return from one of the library windows with intent, eager eyes, and had only fled back into the kitchen at the actual sound of approaching footsteps.

It was scarcely possible that Marjory's thoughts should be more concentrated on Brydain than they had been before his coming; but, naturally, the concentration was all intensified and made tangible by his actual presence in the Great House. And his personality had a great effect on Marjory. Brydain's pleasant manners, his extremely handsome face, were, utterly unconsciously to her, adding to the fascination he had always exercised as the centre of her thoughts a stronger fascination still, which had its rise in his own personal magnetism. Now, as she moved about the kitchen, she was thinking of him so intently that it was as if she herself were in the dining-room, and some white shadow of her moved about the kitchen.

Her preparations were ended at length, and she summoned her mother and Mackenzie. Mackenzie obeyed with another heavy sigh—a sigh so heavy as to be almost a groan—and Marjory, roused from her own thoughts by the sound, looked at him curiously, for the second time, as the three sat down to supper. Her example was followed by Mrs. Mackenzie.

"You're tired, Mackenzie," said the latter, after a brief inspection of her brother-in-law. "It's not fit for a man of your age to tramp about the country as you've done to-day."

"My age!" he retorted, instantly roused by her reflection on his years. Mackenzie was very fond of dwelling on his age himself, but would suffer no allusion to it from others. "And I'd have you to understand, Susan Mackenzie, that it's not so much the greater than your own! I am not wearied; I had my thoughts, woman!"

But Mackenzie did not proceed to impart the thoughts in question at that moment; and his sister-in-law apparently finding no fitting response to the last words, a silence fell on the three, which, only broken by brief interchange of necessary words and—from Mackenzie—gruff replies, lasted until the meal was over.

At the end, Mackenzie pushed back his chair, and silently left the room to clear supper away from the dining-room. This

was accomplished by him in the same grim silence—at least so far as Marjory and Mrs. Mackenzie were aware; for whatever he may have done in the dining-room, he spoke not a single word to them during his movements to and fro. Having placed the last of the plates and dishes in the pantry, he sat down in his chair by the fire again, and gazed gloomily into the red coals.

Mrs. Mackenzie was sitting opposite to him with some needlework; and Marjory was washing up the supper things in the pantry, which was a small, cupboard-like slip of an apartment, made in the thickness of the wall between the larger and the back kitchen. The door between the kitchen and the pantry was wide open, but Marjory, being at one end of the latter, was practically invisible and also comparatively silent, for there was a certain characteristic deftness in her thin white hands, and she moved her cups and plates very gently.

The silence of the spring evening outside was only broken by the sound of Brydain's footstep as he walked round the house slowly, smoking a cigarette, the fragrance of which floated in in whiffs through the window. With one of these whiffs Mackenzie seemed suddenly to awaken from a long train of reflection. He turned his face all at once [from the fire to Mrs. Mackenzie, as she bent over her sewing.

"Poor laddie!" he said, with a long-drawn sigh. "Eh, but my heart misgives me, Susan!"

"What for? Is anything wrong with the master? He looks a bit white, to my thinking, but that's how people mostly do look in London; and he'll soon pick up in his native air, Mackenzie."

"It's not of his health I'm thinking," was the slowly spoken response. "It's himself I'm concerned for."

"Why? I see no call for you to put yourself about." Mrs. Mackenzie looked up enquiringly from the shirt-cuff she was stitching. "I never did see no one like Scotch folk for worriting about nothing! My poor man he was just the same as you for all the world. You're his own brother and no mistake!"

Mackenzie did not instantly answer this discursive remark, and when he did speak his words scarcely constituted a reply.

"You ken the tale I've tellt you since you've dwelt here; more than once I've tellt you it?" he said.

"You mean about the master's dying if he marries?"

Mackenzie gave a curious movement which in a less stiff and angular person might have been called a shiver, and his wrinkled face had perceptibly less colour as he said:

"You're right, though your words are scant; that's my meaning."

"Well, and what of that? He hasn't told you he's going to marry, I suppose?"

Mrs. Mackenzie possessed the profoundest contempt for the story of the Brydain doom. She put it all aside in her mind on her first hearing of it as "foolish talking," and her opinion had only strengthened whenever anything respecting it came to her ears during the months she lived at Brydain. This contempt, however, she dared not actually betray to Mackenzie; and in conversation with him she always had to mask her feelings under a polite interest in it as his concern.

"No; he has na tellt me so," Mackenzie answered very slowly. "But I ken full well that he has thoughts of a woman. I am sair and certain of it; and she'll bring him to his end—to his end," Mackenzie repeated with a groan that was very nearly a sob. "I kenned well that if he went away to London it would come to that. I kenned it all the time."

"How on earth can you know anything of the sort if he didn't tell you?" demanded his matter-of-fact listener.

"I ken it as well as if he had tellt me, and as surely. I spoke to him of it, and he would na answer me nor let me say more; and his words and his way tellt me that there was a woman in his mind."

"Then it's very foolish of you, that's all I can say, Mackenzie. And as to his listening to your talk about it, of course he isn't likely to. Mr. Brydain has too much sense, I believe. I thought him a sensible-looking young gentleman when I first set eyes on him."

At this moment there was a crash, and both looked up. Marjory, standing in the entrance to the pantry, had dropped a milk-jug from her hands, and it lay in pieces at her feet. Mrs. Mackenzie rose quickly. Mackenzie also rose, and left the kitchen by the outer door, as she said to her daughter:

"My gracious, Marjory! whatever are you thinking of?" Marjory made no answer whatever to her mother; not even when Mrs. Mackenzie added, "I do sometimes think you're daft, child!" did she speak.

And she made no attempt to pick up the broken pieces on the floor. She simply stared blankly into space, with her white face whiter than ever and her brown eyes very large and wide.

And when her mother, a good deal irritated by her silence, continued shortly, "You'd better take the candle and go along to bed; it's time you were there!" she obeyed in the same silence, with the same dazed look and manner. She mounted the stairs very slowly, without paying the least heed to her steps, and when she reached her bedroom—a small room opening out of her mother's—she set the candle on the chest of drawers and knelt down by the window, her arms resting on the sill, her great eyes staring out blankly at the night sky, while she murmured to herself in an awe-struck tone, "She'll bring him to his end—to his end."

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